

THE
CONFESSIONS
OF
JEAN-JACQUES
ROUSSEAU



A NEW TRANSLATION
BY J. M. COHEN

THE PENGUIN
CLASSICS

1.80

THE PENGUIN CLASSICS

EDITED BY E. V. RIEU

L33



THE
CONFESSIONS

OF
JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU

*

TRANSLATED
AND WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY
J. M. COHEN

PENGUIN BOOKS
MELBOURNE • LONDON • BALTIMORE

Penguin Books Ltd, Harmondsworth, Middlesex

U.S.A.: Penguin Books Inc., 3300 Clipper Mill Road, Baltimore 11, Md
[*Educational Representative:*

D. C. Heath & Co., 285 Columbus Avenue, Boston 16, Mass]

CANADA: Penguin Books (Canada) Ltd, 47 Green Street,
Saint Lambert, Montreal, P.Q.

AUSTRALIA: Penguin Books Pty Ltd, 762 Whitehorse Road,
Mitcham, Victoria

SOUTH AFRICA: Penguin Books (S.A.) Pty Ltd, Gibraltar House,
Regents Road, Sea Point, Cape Town

—

The *Confessions* (completed in 1765) first published 1781

This translation first published 1953

Reprinted 1954

Made and printed in Great Britain
by R. & R. Clark Ltd
Edinburgh

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	7
----------------------	---

The First Part

BOOK ONE	17
BOOK TWO	52
BOOK THREE	90
BOOK FOUR	130
BOOK FIVE	171
BOOK SIX	215

The Second Part

BOOK SEVEN	261
BOOK EIGHT	326
BOOK NINE	374
BOOK TEN	454
BOOK ELEVEN	504
BOOK TWELVE	544

INTRODUCTION

ON the opening page of this remarkable volume of self-revelations Rousseau claims to be writing a unique work, and one which he believes will find no imitator. In his second claim he was well wide of the mark. For not a decade has passed since the posthumous publication of the *Confessions* that some imaginative writer has not burrowed back in search of his childhood, or tried to impose a retrospective pattern on the thoughts and adventures of his maturity. Goethe, Herzen, Tolstoy, Mill, Ruskin, Trollope, George Moore, Bunin, Gide, are only a few of those who have turned round and remembered as they might not have done but for Jean-Jacques's example. Novels too, as the nineteenth century gave way to the twentieth, took an increasingly autobiographical tone. Dickens gives us only scenes from his childhood; but from *The Way of All Flesh* to *A la recherche du temps perdu* and *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, the recasting in fictional form of the writer's own experience increasingly recurs as the main theme of his novel. Even now, when fiction has tentatively returned to the third person, imaginative autobiography continues to proliferate; and only last year at least two English poets, Roy Campbell and Stephen Spender, published reminiscent volumes that were late branchings from the tree which Rousseau planted a hundred and eighty-five years ago.

Before his day there were perhaps two great autobiographies, St Augustine's *Confessions* and Santa Teresa's *Life of Herself*; and both these works were written not for personal display or justification but to tell of a vital religious experience which might serve as an example to others. By Rousseau's age, however, men had begun to see themselves not as atoms in a society that stretched down from God to the world of nature but as unique individuals, important in their own right. It was possible for the first time, therefore, for a man to write his life in terms only of his worldly experience, and to advance views on his place in the Universe that bore only a distant relationship to the truths of revealed religion. Rousseau set out to win his reader's sympathy for himself, and to gain posthumous partisans who would compensate him for the misunderstanding of which he felt he had been a victim throughout the long misery of his life. His method was to draw the pattern of his feelings while at the same time narrating the events of his

earlier years. For what was important to him was not so much to tell of his history and achievements, as to prove himself a man who, with all his imperfections, was nevertheless fundamentally honest and good. For this purpose he took particular pride in recording – and even in somewhat exaggerating – his more disgraceful actions; in this way displaying an individualistic variant of the Christian virtue of humility. This is perhaps the one feature of the *Confessions* that has found few imitators. For even in the hope of winning applause by their frankness, few men care to display themselves as even more miserable sinners than the rest of mankind.

His rather disconcerting frankness, however, is not the only feature of Rousseau's work that remains unique. For he is himself a unique figure. No one had as much influence as he on the two centuries that followed his brief burst of literary activity; and at the same time no one has revealed more fully the subjective origin of what came to be accepted as his objective thought. It is strange that a cluster of beliefs in the innocence of childhood and of primitive society which have so deeply affected educational and political theory and practice ever since his day should be so naïvely shown to owe their inspiration merely to the over-stimulated infancy of a motherless child in eighteenth-century Geneva, and to its rough interruption by a premature encounter with the rough ways of the world. Yet so faithfully did Rousseau recall his earliest feelings when at the age of fifty-four he began to write his *Confessions* that we have not only a beautifully etched outline of those far-away childhood scenes, but a clear picture as well, which Rousseau was only half aware that he was drawing, of the formative influence of those first incidents on the unattractive, hypersensitive small boy that he was, and through him on the European thought of two centuries. One wonders whether, if he had persisted with that work on *The Morals of Sensibility* which he abandoned when he resolved on his retirement, he would himself have realized the subjective nature of his beliefs. For from what he tells us of this unwritten book in these *Confessions* he had stumbled across the idea that man is no more than a passive re-agent to the stimuli that flood in on him from the outside world: a theory of behaviourism which, if worked out, might have altered the tone of the present work considerably.

'I may omit or transpose facts, or make mistakes in dates', says Rousseau in the opening paragraph of his Seventh Book. 'But I cannot go wrong about what I felt, or about what my feelings have led me to do; and they are the subject of my story.' It is impossible to read any

page that he wrote without realizing that Jean-Jacques was entirely a creature of his feelings. A man whose chronic ill-health was considerably aggravated by his equally constant hypochondria, he was for ever preoccupied with sensations of comfort or discomfort, with likings and dislikings of persons, places, and weather; and his emotions, whether of affection, jealousy, or indignation, were always coloured by the bodily feelings of the moment. One finds in Rousseau very much less constancy of sentiment than in Wordsworth or Goethe, who were both as much in reaction as he was against the enlightened intellectualism of the mid eighteenth century. For whereas their emotions were based on some objective experience of the world, Rousseau's profoundest intimations of anything outside himself, such as the experience he records on the shores of Lake Geneva on his way back from escorting Mme de Warens's maid Merceret to her home, were always muddled by a yearning for he knew not what and by the consciousness that something in the past had escaped him to which he could almost give a name. Rousseau's *Confessions* are, as he said, the story of his feelings, and of what they led him to do. The detail of his memories may often be inaccurate. It is exceedingly difficult, for instance, to ascribe his early journeys to their definite dates. Occasionally, where a check is possible, as of the length of his stay in the hospice at Turin before his abjuration of Protestantism, he may well prove to have exaggerated weeks into months. Again, the idyll of Les Charmettes, if an accurate picture, is ante-dated by something more than a year. For Mme de Warens did not rent Les Charmettes until the autumn of 1737, when Rousseau was already on his travels, from which he returned to find Wintzenried in residence; and it was probably as an outlet for the energies of this bustling young man that the farm was actually taken. It is almost certain, therefore, that Rousseau never had his beloved Mamma to himself there, even for a short time, in the way he describes. For by the spring of 1738 he was already sharing her favours with his Swiss rival. During the greater part of his stay at that remote and beautiful spot the sickly young man was undoubtedly alone. But though Rousseau's memory may have betrayed him over facts, where his feelings are concerned he is never wrong. The somewhat sordid adventure with Mme Larnage, his brief moment of political importance in Venice, his, on the whole unhappy, relations with his successive patrons, and his growing obsession with the conspiracy against him: these and countless other matters in the *Confessions*, the recording of which relies on the calling up of past

states of mind, are re-created in a manner that would be impossible for anyone with a less acute sensibility than Rousseau's. For a parallel, one can only go to the early volumes of *A la recherche du temps perdu*, just as for the long story of the plot against his peace, allegedly instigated by Grimm and Diderot, there is no better comparison than with Marcel's long brooding in Proust's last volumes over the dead Albertine's probable unfaithfulness.

The feeling that most constantly recurs in the *Confessions* is one of loss, a regret for some other way of life that would have brought Rousseau happiness. Supposing that he had married Merceret, as she crudely invited him to do, and set up as a music-teacher in a remote corner of Switzerland, then he would not have climbed out of his own class and come to depend on the favours of the great. When he is in the town Rousseau longs for the country and for uninterrupted communion with Nature. But when in the country he looks back with longing to some earlier time, to the idyll of Les Charmettes – which was in fact imaginary – or into an even more remote past, before his feelings were sullied and prior to his fall from the paradise of early childhood. Always one is conscious that, for all his immense posthumous fame, Rousseau throughout his life made the wrong choices. He was out of his element in the Encyclopaedist circle. Grimm, Diderot, and d'Holbach were rationalists whose standards entirely differed from his own. He was out of his element again, as he confesses in the first book, among people of wit and fashion; for as a man of feeling rather than of intellect he was too slow in his replies to polite conversation, and gauche and tactless in company. It is true that the whole *Confessions* is an attempt to prove that the feelings convey a man's apprehension of truth more faithfully than does the brain. But as a writer of books and originator of theories Rousseau was compelled to compete with the then dominant Encyclopaedists, who appreciated the man of feeling so long as, like Sterne, when he visited them in Paris, he was content to be whimsical, but were ruffled and bored by the earnest and ill-mannered Jean-Jacques, who was always so ready to be offended and often prone to impute bad faith to those who did not readily accept the truth of his rather muddled intuitions. Readers of Lawrence's letters will see how faithfully the same pattern of mutual incomprehension has been repeated in our own day. Rousseau's effect on the next generation was to legitimize and encourage the display of feeling. In fact, he contributed more than any other man to the growth of the Romantic movement. Yet when one compares his life with that of

William Cowper, a man equally hampered by half-imaginary illness, equally preoccupied with his feelings, one sees the poet of *The Task* carefully measuring his commitments, limiting his psychological expenditure to the mild and comfortable joys of friendship, and hiding himself from the fear of hell-fire behind the closed shutters of his firelit room. Rousseau found no such refuge from his more worldly terrors, which in his middle years assumed a form to which we should to-day give the name of persecution-mania. He had ventured into a society in which he did not belong; and when at Montmorency he at last decided that he must escape it was too late. The fatal *Émile* was already at the printers; and his future livelihood in the retirement that he planned depended on the circulation of his works, on the goodwill of princes and potentates whom he had clumsily allowed himself to antagonize.

The last four books of the *Confessions* take on a sombre colour that was only occasionally present in the first eight. There were country pleasures at the Hermitage; there was the charm of the Marshal de Luxembourg's company; there was the short-lived idyll of his residence at the Orangery, and the impact of his books on the world. But these rewards for his early labours came too late for him to enjoy them. Already the sky was dark with threats of persecution. Mme d'Épinay had turned against him for reasons that are only too clear from the interchange of letters which he shows us. Grimm, whom he had once patronized, now wanted to be treated as an equal or, in his tactless German way, as something better than that. One is but too aware of this foreign upstart's lack of manners. But Rousseau does not entirely establish the plot against himself of which he would convince us Grimm was a ringleader. Nor can one feel that Diderot's attempts to guide his actions, over such incidents as the offer of a court pension, were prompted by any ill-will. Rousseau had done all he could to ease the conditions of Diderot's imprisonment when he was in Vincennes. Why should not Diderot now take a perhaps too presumptuous hand in Rousseau's affairs, which he seemed so deplorably unable to manage for himself? But Rousseau, as he so frequently tells us, could not abide any sort of constraint. He must be absolutely free. And so Diderot became another of those scheming enemies whose plots he saw as the cause of all his misfortunes. It is impossible to disentangle the long story of the different breaches of confidence of which Rousseau accuses his former friends, nor can one hope to make sense of their various monetary offers to Mme Le Vasseur. But these might be inter-

puted as officious rather than ill-meaning. One cannot, in fact, accept the veracity of the *Confessions* over such matters. One can, however, always be certain that Rousseau is presenting a faithful account of his feelings at the time. One is readily drawn into his dream world in which every man's hand is against him, and it is with horrified sympathy that one follows him from one temporary refuge to another until the last page on which, though intending to set out for Germany, he in fact took the first step towards England, a country that he already hated, and where he again found his imaginary persecutors already lying in wait for him.

The style of Rousseau's writing is on the whole an easy one, which grows rather careless as his book proceeds. He is capable of composing descriptive passages of great beauty. The tale of the children's tree planting, the incident of the periwinkle growing by the roadside, his first crossing of the Alps, his day picnic with Mlle de Graffenried and her friend, all these are narrated with an exactness and an economy that cannot fail to charm. He is the master, too, of psychological analysis. The description of his own character in the First Book, the gradual building up of the portrait of Mme de Warens and the tale of his unfortunate passion for Mme d'Houdetot – to take three incidents almost at random – are remarkable for their objective clarity. He had, however, a weakness for apostrophe that to-day, especially in his moments of self-pity, clumsily alienates the sympathy he is so anxious to arouse. His rhetorical tricks are very much of his age, and it has been possible to tone them down slightly in translation.

'It is a little curious', wrote Morley, whose study of Jean-Jacques is still one of the most readable, 'that Rousseau, so diffuse in expounding his opinions, and so unscientific in his methods of coming to them, should have been one of the keenest and most trenchant of the controversialists of a very controversial time.' The reason is perhaps that he was never liable to be tempted into digressions. His mind worked too slowly for that. What in his muddled way he felt, he felt with the single-minded conviction of a fanatic. So, despite the length of his *Confessions*, he seldom strays from the task he has set himself. He intends to tell the truth about the extraordinary man that he is, and nothing can deflect him from it.

The outspokenness of certain passages has been much dwelt on by more reticent generations than his or ours. But his sexual revelations are quite devoid of prurience. Indeed, when we have read his account of his amatory exploits we feel quite convinced that he was particularly

unsuccessful as a lover. Sex seems to have pervaded most of his feelings in a diluted form. His ecstasies in field and woodland, his admirations and excitements, all seem to have drained off his sexual energy and left him too little to sustain any relationship more exacting than his humdrum partnership with Thérèse Le Vasseur. As to the story of the abandonment of their children to the Foundling Hospital, there is no alternative but to take his word for it. Several of those in whom he claimed to have confided that sordid story were alive when the *Confessions* were first published and, had it been a fiction, someone would no doubt have contradicted it.

Such was Jean-Jacques Rousseau. There is no need to recapitulate the tale of his first fifty-three years. It was substantially as he himself tells it in these *Confessions*. For the rest, on leaving the territories of Berne in 1764 he received offers of asylum from several friends. Irresolutely he set out for Potsdam, got as far as Strasbourg, changed his mind and was persuaded finally to accept Hume's invitation and come to England. After a couple of months in London, during which he met Johnson – who thought very little of him – and Burke – who thought even less – he was granted a pension by George III, and left for Wooton, Staffordshire, where he lived in the house of a Mr Davenport and wrote the first six Books of the *Confessions*. Without any knowledge of English and with no companion except Thérèse, he spent the winter of 1766 in this bitterly cold exile, and then quarrelled with Hume, whom he accused of taking part in the plot against him, and of being the author of a scurrilous attack, which was in fact written by Horace Walpole. He hastily left the country, to take refuge at the château of Trye, where he lived as the Prince de Conti's guest, under an assumed name, in mortal fear that Hume might pursue him. During the next years he moved on to Grenoble, and then by way of various small places to Lyons, during which time he finished the *Confessions*. Finally, in the summer of 1770 he was allowed to return to Paris, where he spent the last eight years of his life, and where his feelings of persecution to some extent lifted. Here he took up his old pursuit of music-copying, moved in society more modest than before, and endured considerable poverty, since he was unwilling to draw George III's pension. His final *Reveries*, written in the last months of his life, resume some of the themes of the *Confessions* but in a more reflective way, and contain some passages of beautiful writing. His last months were spent in the country, at Ermenonville, where he died, apparently from an apoplectic stroke, at the age of sixty-six on 3 July 1778. There were

reports that he had committed suicide, but these were unsubstantiated, and now appear to be without foundation. He was buried at Ermenonville as he desired. But sixteen years later his body was moved by the revolutionary Convention, and placed with Voltaire's in the Panthéon, in Paris.

Anyone anxious to read more about Jean-Jacques, and particularly about the social and political impact of his ideas, cannot do better than turn to Morley's *Life*, a work which has not appreciably aged in the eighty years since it was written. An excellent, though slightly hostile, biography by C. E. Vulliamy (Geoffrey Bles, 1931) carefully examines the discrepancies between the *Confessions* and the probable facts of Rousseau's life, and gives a reasonably rounded portrait of the man.

I have used the text of the 'Édition Jouaust' for the translation, and compared it on occasions with the 'Édition intégrale', edited by Adrien van Bever (G. Crès et Cie, 1927). I have added the minimum of translator's notes, only identifying the principal historical figures who are mentioned and pointing out the more flagrant errors of memory in Rousseau's story. These notes are printed in square brackets. The rest, when not referring to points of translation, are additional comments by Jean-Jacques himself.

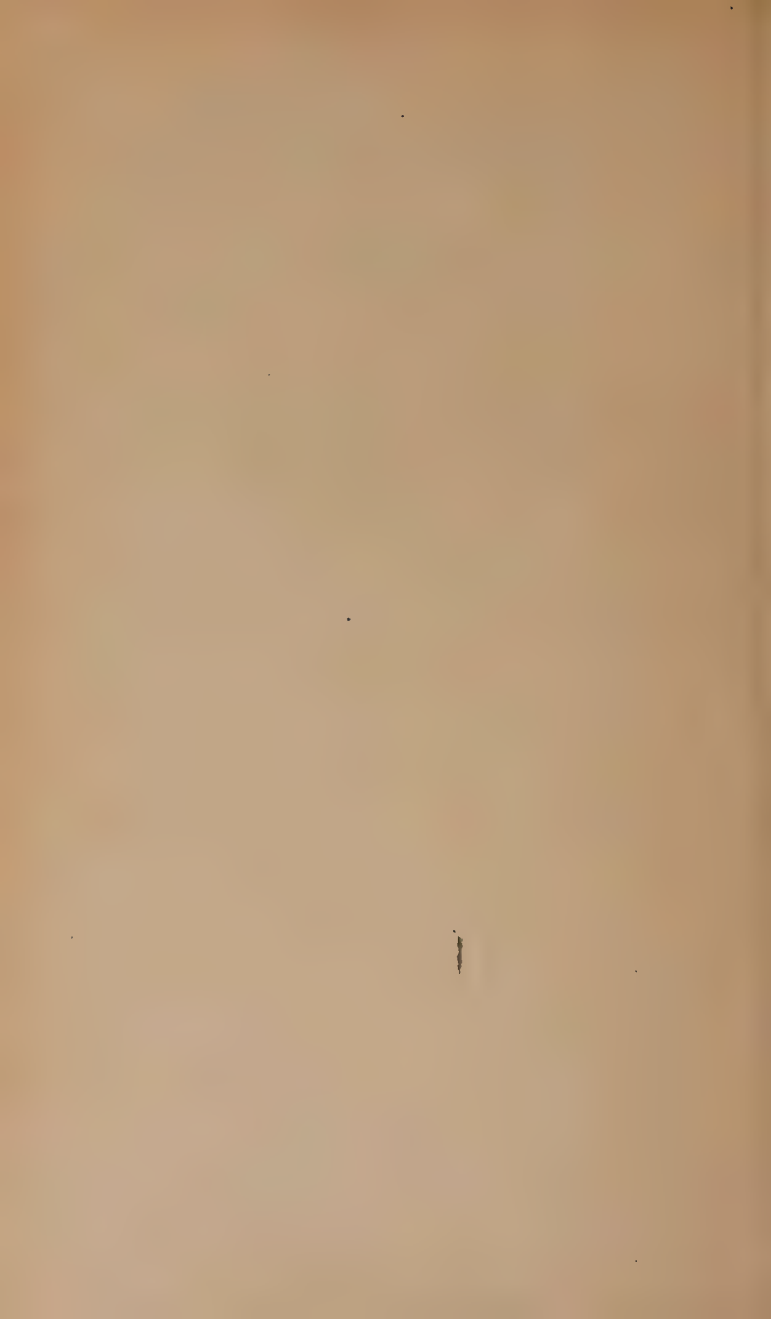
J. M. C.

Spring 1952

THE

First Part

*



BOOK ONE

1712-1719 I have resolved on an enterprise which has no precedent, and which, once complete, will have no imitator. My purpose is to display to my kind a portrait in every way true to nature, and the man I shall portray will be myself.

Simply myself. I know my own heart and understand my fellow man. But I am made unlike any one I have ever met; I will even venture to say that I am like no one in the whole world. I may be no better, but at least I am different. Whether Nature did well or ill in breaking the mould in which she formed me, is a question which can only be resolved after the reading of my book.

Let the last trump sound when it will, I shall come forward with this work in my hand, to present myself before my Sovereign Judge, and proclaim aloud: 'Here is what I have done, and if by chance I have used some immaterial embellishment it has been only to fill a void due to a defect of memory. I may have taken for fact what was no more than probability, but I have never put down as true what I knew to be false. I have displayed myself as I was, as vile and despicable when my behaviour was such, as good, generous, and noble when I was so. I have bared my secret soul as Thou thyself hast seen it, Eternal Being! So let the numberless legion of my fellow men gather round me, and hear my confessions. Let them groan at my depravities, and blush for my misdeeds. But let each one of them reveal his heart at the foot of Thy throne with equal sincerity, and may any man who dares, say "I was a better man than he."'

I was born at Geneva in 1712, the son of Isaac Rousseau, a citizen of that town, and Susanne Bernard, his wife. My father's inheritance, being a fifteenth part only of a very small property which had been divided among as many children, was almost nothing, and he relied for his living entirely on his trade of watchmaker, at which he was very highly skilled. My mother was the daughter of a minister of religion and rather better-off. She had besides both intelligence and beauty, and my father had not found it easy to win her. Their love had begun almost with their birth; at eight or nine they would walk together every evening along La Treille, and at ten they were inseparable. Sympathy and mental affinity strengthened in them a feeling first

formed by habit. Both, being affectionate and sensitive by nature, were only waiting for the moment when they would find similar qualities in another; or rather the moment was waiting for them, and both threw their affections at the first heart that opened to receive them. Fate, by appearing to oppose their passion, only strengthened it. Unable to obtain his mistress, the young lover ate out his heart with grief, and she counselled him to travel and forget her. He travelled in vain, and returned more in love than ever, to find her he loved still faithful and fond. After such a proof, it was inevitable that they should love one another for all their lives. They swore to do so, and Heaven smiled on their vows.

Gabriel Bernard, one of my mother's brothers, fell in love with one of my father's sisters, and she refused to marry him unless her brother could marry my mother at the same time. Love overcame all obstacles, and the two pairs were wedded on the same day. So it was that my uncle married my aunt, and their children became my double first cousins. Within a year both couples had a child, but at the end of that time each of them was forced to separate.

My uncle Bernard, who was an engineer, went to serve in the Empire and Hungary under Prince Eugène, and distinguished himself at the siege and battle of Belgrade. My father, after the birth of my only brother, left for Constantinople, where he had been called to become watchmaker to the Sultan's Seraglio. While he was away my mother's beauty, wit, and talents* brought her admirers, one of the most pressing of whom was M. de la Closure, the French Resident in the city. His feelings must have been very strong, for thirty years later I have seen him moved when merely speaking to me about her. But my mother had more than her virtue with which to defend herself; she

* She had talents much above her station. For her father the minister, who adored her, had taken great pains with her education. She drew, sang, and played accompaniments on the lute; she was well read and wrote very fair verses. Here is an impromptu which she composed as she was walking with her sister-in-law and their two children, apropos some remark made about her absent husband and brother:

Ces deux messieurs qui sont absens
 Nous sont chers de bien des manières:
 Ce sont nos amis, nos amants,
 Ce sont nos maris et nos frères,
 Et les pères de ces enfants.

(These two absent gentlemen are dear to us in many ways. They are our friends and our lovers, they are our husbands and our brothers, and they are these children's fathers.)

deeply loved my father, and urged him to come back. He threw up everything to do so, and I was the unhappy fruit of his return. For ten months later I was born, a poor and sickly child, and cost my mother her life. So my birth was the first of my misfortunes.

I never knew how my father stood up to his loss, but I know that he never got over it. He seemed to see her again in me, but could never forget that I had robbed him of her; he never kissed me that I did not know by his sighs and his convulsive embrace that there was a bitter grief mingled with his affection, a grief which nevertheless intensified his feeling for me. When he said to me, 'Jean-Jacques, let us talk of your mother,' I would reply: 'Very well, father, but we are sure to cry.' 'Ah,' he would say with a groan; 'Give her back to me, console me for her, fill the void she has left in my heart! Should I love you so if you were not more to me than a son?' Forty years after he lost her he died in the arms of a second wife, but with his first wife's name on his lips, and her picture imprinted upon his heart.

Such were my parents. And of all the gifts with which Heaven endowed them, they left me but one, a sensitive heart. It had been the making of their happiness, but for me it has been the cause of all the misfortunes in my life.

I was almost born dead, and they had little hope of saving me. I brought with me the seed of a disorder which has grown stronger with the years, and now gives me only occasional intervals of relief in which to suffer more painfully in some other way. But one of my father's sisters, a nice sensible woman, bestowed such care on me that I survived; and now, as I write this, she is still alive at the age of eighty, nursing a husband rather younger than herself but ruined by drink. My dear aunt, I pardon you for causing me to live, and I deeply regret that I cannot repay you in the evening of your days all the care and affection you lavished on me at the dawn of mine. My nurse Jacqueline is still alive too, and healthy and strong. Indeed the fingers that opened my eyes at birth may well close them at my death.

I suffered before I began to think: which is the common fate of man, though crueller in my case than in another's. I know nothing of myself till I was five or six. I do not know how I learnt to read. I only remember my first books and their effect upon me; it is from my earliest reading that I date the unbroken consciousness of my own existence. My mother had possessed some novels, and my father and I began to read them after our supper. At first it was only to give me some practice in reading. But soon my interest in this entertaining literature became so

strong that we read by turns continuously, and spent whole nights so engaged. For we could never leave off till the end of the book. Sometimes my father would say with shame as we heard the morning larks: 'Come, let us go to bed. I am more of a child than you are.'

In a short time I acquired by this dangerous method, not only an extreme facility in reading and expressing myself, but a singular insight for my age into the passions. I had no idea of the facts, but I was already familiar with every feeling. I had grasped nothing; I had sensed everything. These confused emotions which I experienced one after another, did not warp my reasoning powers in any way, for as yet I had none. But they shaped them after a special pattern, giving me the strangest and most romantic notions about human life, which neither experience nor reflection has ever succeeded in curing me of.

1719-1723 The novels gave out in the summer of 1719, and that winter we changed our reading. Having exhausted my mother's library, we turned to that portion of her father's which had fallen to us. Fortunately it contained some good books, as it could hardly fail to do, for the collection had been formed by a minister, who deserved the title, a man of learning, after the fashion of his day, but of taste and good sense as well. Lesueur's *History of Church and Empire*, Bossuet's *Discourse upon Universal History*, Plutarch's *Lives*, Nani's *History of Venice*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, La Bruyère, Fontenelle's *Worlds* and his *Dialogues with the Dead*, and some volumes of Molière were transported to my father's workshop, where I read them to him every day while he worked.

Thus I acquired a sound taste, which was perhaps unique for my years. Plutarch, of them all, was my especial favourite, and the pleasure I took in reading and re-reading him did something to cure me of my passion for novels. Soon indeed I came to prefer Agesilaus, Brutus, and Aristides to Orondates, Artamenes, and Juba. It was this enthralling reading, and the discussions it gave rise to between my father and myself, that created in me that proud and intractable spirit, that impatience with the yoke of servitude, which has afflicted me throughout my life, in those situations least fitted to afford it scope. Continuously pre-occupied with Rome and Athens, living as one might say with their great men, myself born the citizen of a republic and the son of a father whose patriotism was his strongest passion, I took fire by his example and pictured myself as a Greek or a Roman. I became indeed that

character whose life I was reading; the recital of his constancy or his daring deeds so carrying me away that my eyes sparkled and my voice rang. One day when I was reading the story of Scaevola over table, I frightened them all by putting out my hand and grasping a chafing-dish in imitation of that hero.

I had one brother seven years older than myself, who was learning my father's trade. The extraordinary affection lavished upon me led to his being somewhat neglected, which I consider very wrong. Moreover his education had suffered by this neglect, and he was acquiring low habits even before he arrived at an age at which he could in fact indulge them. He was apprenticed to another master, with whom he took the same liberties as he had taken at home. I hardly ever saw him. Indeed, I can hardly say that I ever knew him, but I did not cease to love him dearly, and he loved me as well as a scoundrel can love. I remember once when my father was correcting him severely and angrily, throwing myself impetuously between them, and clasping my arms tightly around him. Thus I covered him with my body, and received the blows intended for him. So obstinately did I maintain my hold that, either as a result of my tearful cries or so as not to hurt me more than him, my father let him off his punishment. In the end my brother became so bad that he ran away and completely disappeared. We heard some time later that he was in Germany. But he did not write at all, and we had no more news of him after that. So it was that I became an only son.

But if that poor lad's upbringing was neglected, it was a different matter with his brother. No royal child could be more scrupulously cared for than I was in my early years. I was idolized by everyone around me and, what is rarer, always treated as a beloved son, never as a spoiled child. Never once, until I left my father's house, was I allowed to run out alone into the road with the other children. They never had to repress or to indulge in me any of those wayward humours that are usually attributed to Nature, but which are all the product of education alone. I had the faults of my years. I was a chatterer, I was greedy, and sometimes I lied. I would have stolen fruit or sweets or any kind of eatable; but I never took delight in being naughty or destructive, or in accusing other people or torturing poor animals. However, I do remember once having made water in one of our neighbour's cooking-pots while she was at church; her name was Mme Clot. I will even admit that the thought of it still makes me laugh, because Mme Clot, although a good woman on the whole, was the grumpiest old body I

have ever met. And that is a brief and truthful account of all my childish misdeeds.

How could I have turned out wicked when I had nothing but examples of kindness before my eyes, none but the best people in the world around me? My father, my aunt, my nurse, our friends and relations and everyone near me, may not have done my every bidding, but they did love me, and I loved them in return. My desires were so rarely excited and so rarely thwarted, that it never came into my head to have any. I could swear indeed that until I was put under a master I did not so much as know what it was to want my own way. When I was not reading or writing with my father, or going out for walks with my nurse, I spent all my time with my aunt, watching her embroider, hearing her sing, always sitting or standing beside her; and I was happy. Her cheerfulness and kindness and her pleasant face have left such an impression upon me that I can still remember her manner, her attitude and the way she looked. I recall too her affectionate little remarks, and I could still describe her clothes and her headdress, not forgetting the two curls of black hair she combed over her temples in the fashion of the day.

I am quite sure that it is to her I owe my taste, or rather my passion, for music, though it did not develop in me till long afterwards. She knew an enormous number of songs and tunes which she sang in a thin voice, that was very sweet. Such was the serenity of this excellent woman that it kept melancholy and sadness away, not only from her but from anyone who came near her; and such delight did I take in her singing that not only have many of her songs remained in my memory, but even now that I have lost her, others which I had completely forgotten since my childhood come back to me as I grow older, with a charm that I cannot express. It may seem incredible but, old dotard that I am, eaten up with cares and infirmities, I still find myself weeping like a child as I hum her little airs in my broken, tremulous voice. There is one in particular, the whole tune of which has come back to me. But the second half of the words persistently defies all my efforts to remember them, though I have a confused memory of the rhymes. Here is the opening and as much as I can recall of the rest:

Thyrsis, I dare not come
To listen to your playing
Under the elm.
For round our farm
Do you know what they're saying?

A shepherd born
Who faithfully swore
nothing to fear
But never is a rose without a thorn.

I strive in vain to account for the strange effect which that song has on my heart, but I cannot explain why I am moved. All I know is that I am quite incapable of singing it to the end without breaking into tears. Countless times I have made up my mind to write to Paris and find out the rest of the words, if there is anyone who still knows them. But I am almost sure that the pleasure I derive from recalling the tune would partly vanish, once I had proof that anyone but my poor aunt Suson had sung it.

Such were the first affections of my dawning years; and thus there began to form in me, or to display itself for the first time, a heart at once proud and affectionate, and a character at once effeminate and inflexible, which by always wavering between weakness and courage, between self-indulgence and virtue, has throughout my life set me in conflict with myself, to such effect that abstinence and enjoyment, pleasure and prudence have alike eluded me.

The course of my education was interrupted by an accident, the consequences of which have influenced the rest of my life. My father quarrelled with M. Gautier, a French captain with relations on the Council. This Gautier was a braggart and a coward who, happening to bleed at the nose, revenged himself by accusing my father of having drawn his sword against him in the city. When they decided to put my father in prison, however, he insisted that, according to the law, his accuser should be arrested also; and when he failed to get his way he preferred to leave Geneva and remain abroad for the rest of his life rather than lose both liberty and honour by giving in.

I stayed behind in the charge of my uncle Bernard, who was then employed on the city's fortifications. His elder daughter was dead, but he had a son of my age, and we were sent together to Bossey to board with the pastor, M. Lambercier, to learn Latin and all that sorry nonsense as well that goes by the name of education.

Two years' sojourn in that village somewhat modified my harsh Roman manners, and brought me back to the stage of childhood. At Geneva, where nothing was demanded of me, I loved steady reading, which was almost my sole amusement; at Bossey the work I had to do made me prefer games, which I played as a relaxation. The country too was such a fresh experience that I could never have enough of it.

Indeed the taste that I got for it was so strong that it has remained inextinguishable, and the memory of the happy days I spent there has made me long regretfully for a country life and its pleasures at every stage of my existence, till now, when I am in the country once more. M. Lambercier was a very intelligent man; though he did not neglect our lessons, he did not load us with excessive work; and the proof of his capability is that, despite my dislike for compulsion, I have never looked back with distaste on my lesson times with him. I may not have learnt very much from him, but what I did learn I learnt without difficulty and I have remembered it all.

The simplicity of this rural existence brought me one invaluable benefit; it opened my heart to friendship. Up to that time I had known nothing but lofty and theoretical emotions. Living peacefully side by side with my cousin Bernard gave me a bond of affection with him, and in a very short time I felt a greater attachment for him than I had ever felt for my brother, an attachment that has never disappeared. He was a tall, lank, sickly boy, as mild in spirit as he was weak in body, and he never abused his favoured position in the house as my guardian's son. We shared the same studies, the same amusements, and the same tastes; we were on our own and of the same age, and each of us needed a companion; to be separated would have broken our hearts. Seldom though we had the opportunity of proving our attachment to one another, it was extremely strong. For not only could we not have lived one moment apart, but we never imagined that we could ever be parted. Being both of a nature easily swayed by affection, and tractable so long as there was no attempt at constraint, we were always in agreement on all subjects, and if the favour of our guardians gave him some advantage when they were present, the ascendancy was mine when we were alone – which redressed the balance. At our lessons I prompted him if he broke down; and when I had written my exercise I helped him with his. In our sports too I was the more active, and always took the lead. In fact our two natures agreed so well, and our friendship was so mutual and whole-hearted that for five complete years, both at Bossey and at Geneva, we were almost inseparable. We often fought, I confess, but no one ever had to part us. Not one of our quarrels lasted more than a quarter of an hour, and not once did either of us complain of the other. It may be said that these observations are puerile, but the relationship they describe is perhaps a unique one in all the history of childhood.

The manner of my life at Bossey suited me so well that if only it had

lasted longer it could not have failed to fix my character for ever. It was founded on the affectionate, tender, and peaceable emotions. There was never, I believe, a creature of our kind with less vanity than I. By sudden transports I achieved moments of bliss, but immediately afterwards I relapsed into langour. My strongest desire was to be loved by everyone who came near me. I was gentle, so was my cousin, and so were our guardians. For a whole two years I was neither the witness nor the victim of any violence. Everything served to strengthen the natural disposition of my heart. Nothing seemed to me so delightful as to see everyone pleased with me and with everything. I shall always remember repeating my catechism in church, where nothing upset me more than the grieved and anxious look on Mlle Lambercier's face when I hesitated. This made me unhappier than did my shame at faltering in public, though that too distressed me exceedingly. For although I was not very susceptible to praise, I was always extremely sensitive to disgrace. But I may say now that the expectation of a scolding from Mlle Lambercier alarmed me less than the fear of annoying her.

Neither she nor her brother was lacking in severity when necessary. But as their severity was almost always just and never excessive, I took it to heart and never resented it. I was more upset at displeasing them, however, than at being punished; and a word of rebuke was more painful to me than a blow. It embarrasses me to be more explicit, but it is necessary nevertheless. How differently people would treat children if only they saw the eventual results of the indiscriminate, and often culpable, methods of punishment they employ! The magnitude of the lesson to be derived from so common and unfortunate a case as my own has resolved me to write it down.

Since Mlle Lambercier treated us with a mother's love, she had also a mother's authority, which she exercised sometimes by inflicting on us such childish chastisements as we had earned. For a long while she confined herself to threats, and the threat of a punishment entirely unknown to me frightened me sufficiently. But when in the end I was beaten I found the experience less dreadful in fact than in anticipation; and the very strange thing was that this punishment increased my affection for the inflicter. It required all the strength of my devotion and all my natural gentleness to prevent my deliberately earning another beating; I had discovered in the shame and pain of the punishment an admixture of sensuality which had left me rather eager than otherwise for a repetition by the same hand. No doubt, there being some degree of precocious sexuality in all this, the same punishment at the hands of

her brother would not have seemed pleasant at all. But he was of too kindly a disposition to be likely to take over this duty; and so, if I refrained from earning a fresh punishment, it was only out of fear of annoying Mlle Lambercier; so much am I swayed by kindness, even by kindness that is based on sensuality, that it has always prevailed with me over sensuality itself.

The next occasion, which I postponed, although not through fear, occurred through no fault of mine – that is to say I did not act deliberately. But I may say that I took advantage of it with an easy conscience. This second occasion, however, was also the last. For Mlle Lambercier had no doubt detected signs that this punishment was not having the desired effect. She announced, therefore, that she would abandon it, since she found it too exhausting. Hitherto we had always slept in her room, and sometimes, in winter, in her bed. Two days afterwards we were made to sleep in another room, and henceforward I had the honour, willingly though I would have dispensed with it, of being treated as a big boy.

Who could have supposed that this childish punishment, received at the age of eight at the hands of a woman of thirty, would determine my tastes and desires, my passions, my very self for the rest of my life, and that in a sense diametrically opposed to the one in which they should normally have developed. At the moment when my senses were aroused my desires took a false turn and, confining themselves to this early experience, never set about seeking a different one. With sensuality burning in my blood almost from my birth, I kept myself pure and unsullied up to an age when even the coldest and most backward natures have developed. Tormented for a long while by I knew not what, I feasted feverish eyes on lovely women, recalling them ceaselessly to my imagination, but only to make use of them in my own fashion as so many Mlle Lamberciers.

My morals might well have been impaired by these strange tastes, which persisted with a depraved and insane intensity. But in fact they kept me pure even after the age of puberty. If ever education was chaste and decent, mine was. My three aunts were not only women of remarkable virtue, but examples of a modesty that has long since disappeared from womankind. My father was a pleasure lover, but a gallant of the old school, and never made a remark in the hearing of those women he loved most that would have brought a blush to a virgin's cheek; and never was the respect due to children more scrupulously observed than in my family and in my case. I did not find the

slightest difference in this respect at M. Lambercier's; a very good servant maid was dismissed for a dubious word pronounced in our hearing. Not only had I not till adolescence any clear ideas concerning sexual intercourse, but my muddled thoughts on the subject always assumed odious and disgusting shapes. I had a horror of prostitutes which has never left me, and I could not look on a debauchee without contempt and even fear. Such had been my horror of immorality, even since the day when, on my way to Petit Saconex along the sunken road, I saw the holes in the earth on either side where I was told such people performed their fornications. When I thought of this I was always reminded of the coupling of dogs, and my stomach turned over at the very thought.

These adolescent prejudices would themselves have been sufficient to retard the first explosions of an inflammable temperament. But they were reinforced, as I have said, by the effect upon me of the promptings of sensuality. Imagining no pleasures other than those I had known, I could not, for all the restless tinglings in my veins, direct my desires towards any other form of gratification. Always I stopped short of imagining those satisfactions which I had been taught to loathe, and which, little though I suspected it, were in fact not so far divorced from those I envisaged. In my crazy fantasies, my wild fits of eroticism, and in the strange behaviour which they sometimes drove me to, I always invoked, imaginatively, the aid of the opposite sex, without so much as dreaming that a woman could serve any other purpose than the one I lusted for.

Not only, therefore, did I, though ardent, lascivious, and precocious by nature, pass the age of puberty without desiring or knowing any other sensual pleasures than those which Mlle Lambercier had, in all innocence, acquainted me with; but when finally, in the course of years, I became a man I was preserved by that very perversity which might have been my undoing. My old childish tastes did not vanish, but became so intimately associated with those of maturity that I could never, when sensually aroused, keep the two apart. This peculiarity, together with my natural timidity, has always made me very backward with women, since I have never had the courage to be frank or the power to get what I wanted, it being impossible for the kind of pleasure I desired – to which the other kind is no more than a consummation – to be taken by him who wants it, or to be guessed at by the woman who could grant it. So I have spent my days in silent longing in the presence of those I most loved. I never dared to reveal my strange

taste, but at least I got some pleasure from situations which pandered to the thought of it. To fall on my knees before a masterful mistress, to obey her commands, to have to beg for her forgiveness, have been to me the most delicate of pleasures; and the more my vivid imagination heated my blood the more like a spellbound lover I looked. As can be imagined, this way of making love does not lead to rapid progress, and is not very dangerous to the virtue of the desired object. Consequently I have possessed few women, but I have not failed to get a great deal of satisfaction in my own way, that is to say imaginatively. So it is that my sensibility, combined with my timidity and my romantic nature, have preserved the purity of my feelings and my morals, by the aid of those same tastes which might, with a little more boldness, have plunged me into the most brutal sensuality.

Now I have made the first and most painful step in the dark and miry maze of my confessions. It is the ridiculous and the shameful, not one's criminal actions, that it is hardest to confess. But henceforth I am certain of myself; after what I have just had the courage to say, nothing else will defeat me. How much it has cost me to make such revelations can be judged when I say that though sometimes labouring under passions that have robbed me of sight, of hearing, and of my senses, though sometimes trembling convulsively in my whole body in the presence of the woman I loved, I have never, during the whole course of my life, been able to force myself, even in moments of extreme intimacy, to confess my peculiarities and implore her to grant the one favour which was lacking. That confession I was only able to make once, when I was a child to a child of my own age, and then it was she who made the first overtures.

When I trace my nature back in this way to its earliest manifestations, I find features which may appear incompatible, but which have nevertheless combined to form a strong, simple, and uniform whole. I find other features, however, which, though similar in appearance, have formed by a concatenation of circumstances combinations so different that one could never suppose them to be in any way related to one another. Who would imagine, for instance, that I owe one of the most vigorous elements in my character to the same origins as the weakness and sensuality that flows in my veins? Before we leave the subject I have been dwelling on, I will show it under a very different light.

One day I was learning my lessons alone in the room next to the kitchen, where the servant had left Mlle Lambercier's combs to dry on

the stove top. Now when she came to take them off, she discovered that the teeth of one were broken off, all down one side. Who was to be blamed for this? I was the only person who had been in the room; but I said I had not touched it. M. and Mlle Lambercier jointly lectured, pressed, and threatened me; but I stubbornly maintained my denial. Appearances were too strong for me, however, and all my protests were overruled, although this was the first time that I had been convicted of a downright lie. They took the matter seriously, as it deserved. The mischief, the untruth, and my persistent denials, all seemed to deserve a punishment; but this time it was not Mlle Lambercier who inflicted it. They wrote to my Uncle Bernard, and he came. My cousin was accused of another crime no less grave; we were awarded the same chastisement, which was a severe one. If they had intended to allay my depraved tastes for ever by using the evil as its own remedy, they could not have gone about it in a better way. For a long time my desires left me in peace.

They were unable to force from me the confession they required. Though the punishment was several times repeated and I was reduced to the most deplorable condition, I remained inflexible. I would have died rather than give in, and I was resolved to. So force had to yield before the diabolical obstinacy of a child. For that is what they called my persistence. But finally I emerged from that cruel ordeal shattered but triumphant.

It is now nearly fifty years since this occurrence, and I have no fear of a fresh punishment for the offence. But I declare before Heaven that I was not guilty. I had not broken, nor so much as touched, the comb. I had not gone near the stove, nor so much as thought of doing so. But do not ask me how the mischief occurred. I have no idea, and I cannot understand it. But I do most positively know that I was innocent.

Imagine a person timid and docile in ordinary life, but proud, fiery, and inflexible when roused, a child who has always been controlled by the voice of reason, always treated with kindness, fairness, and indulgence, a creature without a thought of injustice, now for the first time suffering a most grave one at the hands of the people he loves best and mostly deeply respects. Imagine the revolution in his ideas, the violent change of his feelings, the confusion in his heart and brain, in his small intellectual and moral being! I say, imagine all this if you can. For myself I do not feel capable of unravelling the strands or even remotely following all that happened at that time within me.

I had not yet sufficient reasoning power to realize the extent to which

appearances were against me, to put myself in my elders' position. I clung to my own, and all I felt was the cruelty of an appalling punishment for a crime I had not committed. The physical pain was bad enough, but I hardly noticed it; what I felt was indignation, rage, and despair. My cousin was in a more or less similar case; he had been punished for what had only been a mistake but was taken for a premeditated crime, and he, following my example, got into a rage, and so to speak, worked himself up to the same pitch as myself. Lying together in the same bed, we embraced wildly, almost stifling one another; and when our young hearts were somewhat assuaged and we could give voice to our anger, we sat up and shouted a hundred times in unison at the tops of our voices: 'Carnifex! * carnifex! carnifex!'

I feel my pulse beat faster once more as I write. I shall always remember that time if I live to be a thousand. That first meeting with violence and injustice has remained so deeply engraved on my heart that any thought which recalls it summons back this first emotion. The feeling was only a personal one in its origins, but it has since assumed such a consistency and has become so divorced from personal interests that my blood boils at the sight or the tale of any injustice, whoever may be the sufferer and wherever it may have taken place, in just the same way as if I were myself its victim. When I read of the cruelties of a fierce tyrant, of the subtle machinations of a rascally priest, I would gladly go and stab the wretch myself, even if it were to cost me my life a hundred times over. I have often run till I dropped, flinging stones at some cock or cow or dog, or any animal that I saw tormenting another because it felt itself the stronger. This is perhaps an innate characteristic in me. Indeed I think it is. But the memory of the first injustice I suffered was so painful, so persistent, and so intricately bound up with it that, however strong my initial bent in that direction, this youthful experience must certainly have powerfully reinforced it.

There ended the serenity of my childish life. From that moment I never again enjoyed pure happiness, and even to-day I am conscious that memory of childhood's delights stops short at that point. We stayed some months longer at Bossey. We lived as we are told the first man lived in the earthly paradise, but we no longer enjoyed it; in appearance our situation was unchanged, but in reality it was an entirely different kind of existence. No longer were we young people bound by ties of respect, intimacy, and confidence to our guardians; we no longer looked on them as gods who read our hearts; we were less

ashamed of wrongdoing, and more afraid of being caught; we began to be secretive, to rebel, and to lie. All the vices of our years began to corrupt our innocence and to give an ugly turn to our amusements. Even the country no longer had for us those sweet and simple charms that touch the heart; it seemed to our eyes depressing and empty, as if it had been covered by a veil that cloaked its beauties. We gave up tending our little gardens, our herbs and flowers. We no longer went out to scratch the surface of the ground and shout with delight at finding one of the seeds we had sown beginning to sprout. We grew to dislike that life; and they grew to dislike us. So my uncle took us away, and we left M. and Mme Lambercier, with few regrets on either side, each party having grown weary of the other.

More than thirty years have passed since my departure from Bossey without my once recalling my stay there in any consecutive way or with any pleasure. But now that I have passed my prime and am declining into old age, I find these memories reviving as others fade, and stamping themselves on my mind with a charm and vividness of outline that grows from day to day. It is as if, feeling my life escaping from me, I were trying to recapture it at its beginnings. The smallest events of that time please me by the mere fact that they are of that time. I remember places and people and moments in all their detail. I can see the man- or maid-servant bustling about the room, a swallow flying in at the window, a fly alighting on my hand while I am saying my lesson. I can see the whole arrangement of the room in which we lived, on the right of which was M. Lambercier's study, with an engraving of all the popes, a barometer, and a large almanac on the walls. The windows were darkened by raspberry canes, which sometimes grew into the room; for the garden climbed steeply above the back of the house, and overshadowed it. I am well aware that the reader does not require information, but I, on the other hand, feel impelled to give it to him. Why should I not relate all the little incidents of that happy time, that still give me a flutter of pleasure to recall – six or seven of them at least. . . . Or let us strike a bargain. I will let you off five and be content with one, just one, so long as I am allowed to take as long as I like in telling it, in order to prolong my pleasure.

If I were not concerned for yours, I might choose the tale of Mlle Lambercier's unfortunate tumble at the end of the field, which caused her to display her full back view to the King of Sardinia as he passed. But the incident of the walnut tree on the terrace pleases me better. For I took part in it, whereas I was only a spectator of Mlle Lambercier's

tumble; and I assure you that I did not find the least cause for laughter in an accident which, though comical in itself, filled me with alarm on behalf of one whom I loved as a mother, or perhaps even more dearly.

Outside the gate into the courtyard, on the left as you came in, was a terrace on which we often sat of an afternoon, although it was fully exposed to the sun. In order to provide some shade, however, M. Lambercier had a walnut tree planted there. Its planting was carried out with all solemnity; we two boarders were its godparents, and whilst the hole was being filled we each held the tree with one hand, singing triumphal songs. Now for its watering a kind of trench was left all round it, and every day my cousin and I eagerly watched the watering ceremony, which confirmed us in our natural belief that it was a finer thing to plant a tree on a terrace than a flag in the breech. We resolved, therefore, to win that glory for ourselves and share it with no one.

For that purpose we went and cut a slip from a young willow, and planted it on the terrace some eight or ten feet from the sacred walnut. Nor did we omit to dig a trench round our tree, but the difficulty was to obtain the wherewithal to fill it. For our water was brought from a considerable distance, and we children were not allowed to run out and fetch it. Nevertheless our willow could not thrive without it, and for some days we resorted to every sort of device for getting it, to such good effect that it budded beneath our eyes, putting out little leaves whose growth we measured hour by hour, in the firm belief that, though it was not a foot high, it would not be long before it cast us a shade.

Now our tree was our sole preoccupation, and we went about in a sort of fever, incapable of applying ourselves to our lessons or to anything else. Our elders, therefore, unable to make out the cause of the trouble, kept us more confined than ever; and the fatal moment drew near when our water would give out. We were desperate at the thought of watching our tree parch to death. Finally invention's mother, necessity, suggested a way of keeping it alive and saving ourselves from death by despair. Our plan was to make an underground tunnel which would secretly bring to the willow some of the water which was given to the walnut tree. Feverishly we undertook our enterprise, but at first it did not succeed; the runnel filled up with dirt, and everything went wrong. But nothing deterred us: '*Labor omnia vincit improbus.*' We dug away more earth and deepened our trench to give the water a flow; and we cut some boxes into little narrow boards, putting some

of them flat at the bottom and propping others at angles at each side to make a triangular channel for our stream. Where it flowed in we planted thin sticks at intervals to form a grating or trap that would hold up the fine earth and stones, and keep the channel free for the water. Then we carefully covered our work, treading the soil well down, and on the day when it was completed waited in an ecstasy of alternate hope and fear for watering time. After centuries of delay the hour came round at last, and M. Lambercier emerged, as usual, to witness the ceremony, throughout which we both stood behind him, to hide our tree. For, most fortunately, he had his back to it.

A few seconds after the first bucket was poured in we saw a trickle of water flow into our trench. At this sight our caution deserted us, and we set up such shouts of joy that M. Lambercier turned round; which was a pity since he had just been observing with delight how good the soil was around his tree and how greedily it absorbed the water. Shocked, however, to see it providing for two trenches, he also set up a shout. Then, taking a closer look, he discovered our trick and sent straight for a mattock, which quickly knocked a few of our boards flying. 'An aqueduct! an aqueduct!' he cried, and rained down his merciless blows on every side. Each one of them pierced us to the heart. In a moment the boards, the runnel, the trench, and the willow were all destroyed, and the earth all round was ploughed up. But, in the course of all this frightful business, the only words uttered were his cries of 'An aqueduct! an aqueduct!' as he knocked everything to pieces.

It may be supposed that the incident had unpleasant consequences for the young architects. But not so. That was all. M. Lambercier did not utter a word of reproach, did not look sternly upon us, and never mentioned the matter at all, though we heard his full-throated laughing out shortly afterwards from his sister's room. You could hear M. Lambercier's laugh from afar. What was even more surprising, however, was that when the first shock was over, we were not very distressed ourselves. We planted another tree in another place, and often reminded one another of the first one's unhappy fate, by significantly repeating 'An aqueduct! an aqueduct!' Before that time I had had occasional bouts of conceit and fancied myself an Aristides or a Brutus; but this was my first well-defined attack of vanity. To have built an aqueduct with our own hands and set a cutting to compete with a large tree seemed to me the very height of glory, the meaning of which I understood better at ten than did Caesar at thirty.

The memory of that incident so stuck in my mind – or was so.

forcibly recalled to it – that one of my dearest plans, on revisiting Geneva in 1754, was to go back to Bossey, and see the memorials of my youth, chief among them that well-loved walnut tree, which by that time would have been a third of a century old. But I was so besieged by people, so little my own master, that I could not find a moment in which to please myself. It is unlikely that I shall ever have this opportunity again. But though I have lost all hope of ever seeing it now, I still long to do so, and were I ever to return to that dear village and find my walnut tree still alive, I should most probably water it with my tears.

On my return to Geneva I stayed for two or three years with my uncle, waiting for them to decide what should be done with me. He intended his own son for an engineer, and so made him learn drawing and taught him the elements of Euclid. I shared these lessons with him, and got a taste for them, especially for the drawing. In the meantime they were discussing whether to make me a watchmaker, a lawyer, or a minister. My preference was for the ministry, for I fancied myself as a preacher. But the little income from my mother's property had to be divided between my brother and myself, and was not enough for me to study on. Since I was too young, however, for a decision to be really urgent, I remained provisionally at my uncle's more or less wasting my time, but paying all the same – as was only right – quite a little for my board.

My uncle, like my father, was a pleasure lover, but had not learnt, like him, enough self-mastery to do his duty. So he paid very little attention to us. My aunt was a religious woman, of a rather pietistical turn, who preferred singing her psalms to looking after our education. So we were allowed almost complete freedom, which we never abused. We were sufficient company for one another, and almost inseparable. So we were not tempted to mix with the riff-raff of our own age, and did not pick up any of those loose habits that idleness might have led us into. But I am wrong to speak of us as idle; never in our lives were we less so, and the lucky thing was that all the crazes that attracted us, one after another, kept us together, busily occupied at home, and not tempted even to go out in the road. We constructed cages, pipes, kites, drums, and model houses, toy guns and bows, and blunted my poor old grandfather's tools, imitating him in his craft of watchmaking. But our especial preference was for scribbling on paper, drawing, colour washing, painting, and generally wasting the materials. An Italian showman came to Geneva, a man by the name of Gamba-Corta, and we went to see him once, but refused to go again. He gave a marionette

show, and we made marionettes; his marionettes acted a kind of comedy, and we made up comedies for ours. Then, producing our voices from deep in our throats in unskilful imitation of Mr Punch, we performed these charming comedies, which our unfortunate relatives were patient enough to sit through. But one day Uncle Bernard read us a very fine sermon in his serious style, and we then began to make up sermons. These details are not very interesting, I admit, but they serve to show that our early education was on the right lines. For though we were almost our own masters at a very early age, we were scarcely ever tempted to misuse our time. So little were we in need of companions, indeed, that we even neglected opportunities for finding them. When we went for walks we watched the children's games without envy, from a distance, and did not so much as think of joining in. Our own friendship so filled our hearts that we had only to be together and the simplest pleasures were delightful.

By dint of always being together we became noticeable, especially since, my cousin being so tall and I so short, we made a curiously assorted pair. His long, thin shape and his little face like a wrinkled apple, his soft expression and slovenly gait, incited the children to make fun of him. In their country dialect they gave him the nickname of *Barnâ Bredanna*,^{*} and as soon as we came out we heard *Barnâ Bredanna* shouted all around us. He could bear this more patiently than I. I got angry, and wanted to fight, which was just what the little devils wanted. I fought, and was beaten. My poor cousin did his best to back me up; but he was not strong and one punch sent him over. Then I lost my temper, but although I caught plenty of blows on my head and shoulders it was not me they were after but *Barnâ Bredanna*. However I had made things so much worse by my headstrong temper that we dared not go out except when they were in class, through fear of being booed and followed by the schoolchildren.

So already I was a righter of wrongs. To be a proper knight-errant I only needed a lady; I acquired two. Every now and then I used to go and see my father at Nyon, a little village in the Vaudois where he had settled. He was very well liked, and his popularity extended to me. During the little time I spent with him everyone competed to entertain me. A certain Mme de Vulson, in particular, smothered me with kisses and, to complete my happiness, her daughter adopted me as her young man. It is obvious what purpose a young man of eleven serves for a girl

[^{*} Bridled ass. Bernard is the ass in the medieval Roman de Renard, and the local pronunciation seems to have been Barnâ.]

of twenty-two. Such artful maidens know how to make use of little men as covers for their affairs with their elders, or to tempt real lovers by making an attractive show with unreal ones. But I did not see any disparity between us and took the matter seriously. I gave myself to her with all my heart, or rather with all my head, for my love, desperate though it was, was almost entirely of the imagination. Nevertheless I indulged in emotional scenes, agitations, and furies which were quite ridiculous.

I know two very distinct sorts of love, both real but with practically nothing in common except that they are alike extremely violent and different in every way from a mere friendly affection. The whole course of my life has been divided between these two quite separate emotions, and I have even experienced them both simultaneously. For instance, at the time I am speaking of, whilst so publicly and tyrannically monopolizing Mlle de Vulson that I could not bear any man to come near her, I was having very short but very passionate encounters with a little Mlle Goton, who was so kind as to play the schoolmistress to me – and that was all. But that all meant everything. It seemed the height of bliss. For, suspecting already the key to the mystery although I could only make childish use of it, I compensated myself, behind Mlle de Vulson's back, for the use she put me to as a mask for her other amours. But, to my great mortification, my secret was discovered – or rather less well kept by my little schoolmistress than by me – and very soon we were separated.

She was indeed a strange little person, was Mlle Goton. She was not beautiful, but her face was not easy to forget. I can remember it yet, rather vividly at times for an old fool. Her eyes, especially, but her figure and her manner too, were out of keeping with her years. She had a proud, rather overbearing way with her which very well suited her schoolmistress's role, and indeed had given us the first idea for it. But the oddest thing about her was a mixture of boldness and modesty difficult to imagine. She took the greatest liberties with me, but never allowed me to take any with her; she treated me exactly like a child, which makes me imagine that she had either ceased to be one herself, or that she was so childish, on the other hand, that she only saw the danger she was exposing herself to as a game.

I gave myself over entirely, as you might say, to both these young ladies, so completely in fact that when I was with either of them I never thought of the other. But, on the other hand, there was no similarity between the emotions each of them roused in me. I could

have spent my whole life with Mlle de Vulson without a thought of leaving her; but when I met her my pleasure was a calm one, never bordering on passion. I liked her best in fine company; her sense of humour, her sharp tongue, my jealousies even, attached me to her and made her interesting. I swelled with pride when she preferred me to grown-up rivals, whom she appeared to slight. I was in a torment, but I loved my torment. Applause, encouragement, and laughter excited me and raised my spirits. I indulged in bursts of anger and sallies of wit. In company I was beside myself with love for her; alone with her, I should have been constrained and cold, perhaps bored. All the same I was tenderly concerned for her, I suffered when she was ill, I would have sacrificed my health to restore hers – and I knew very well from experience the difference between sickness and health. When I was away from her I thought of her and missed her; when we were together her kisses warmed my heart, but did not rouse my senses. I was on terms of easy familiarity with her, for I asked no more of her in imagination than she gave me in fact. All the same I could not have borne to see her give as much to others. I loved her as a brother, but with a lover's jealousy.

But if I had so much as supposed that Mlle Goton could lavish on anyone else the attentions I received at her hands I should have been jealous as a Turk, and as savage as a tiger. For the favours she granted me were favours to be begged for on bended knee. On greeting Mlle de Vulson I had a feeling of lively pleasure, but was undisturbed. But I had only to see Mlle Goton, and my eyes were blind to all else, my senses aswim. With Mlle de Vulson I was familiar without familiarity; but before Mlle Goton I trembled with agitation even at the height of our greatest intimacies. I think that if I had remained longer with her it would have killed me; I should have been choked by the beatings of my own heart. I was equally afraid of displeasing either; but to one I was obedient, to the other submissive. I would not have offended Mlle de Vulson for anything in the world; but if Mlle Goton had commanded me to jump into the flames I think I should have obeyed her unhesitatingly.

Fortunately for us both, my affair, or rather my meetings, with Mlle Goton, did not last long. My connexion with Mlle de Vulson also, though far less dangerous and rather longer in duration, concluded in catastrophe. Such things should always end on a somewhat romantic note, offering opportunities for a scene. My relations with Mlle de Vulson, though less passionate than those with Mlle Goton, had

been perhaps the more binding. We never parted without tears, and each time I left her I suffered a strange and overpowering sense of emptiness. I could talk and think of nothing but her. My grief, therefore, was deep and genuine; but I think that, at bottom, my violent feelings were not all for her; the amusements of which she was the centre had their share in them too. To assuage the pains of separation we carried on a correspondence pathetic enough to melt a stone, till finally I triumphed; she could stand it no longer. She came to Geneva to see me, and for a moment my head was completely turned. For the two days of her stay I was intoxicated, beside myself, and when she left I longed to throw myself in the water after her. For a while I rent the air with my cries. A week later she sent me some sweets and some gloves, which would have seemed a most charming attention if I had not heard at the same time that she had married, and that the visit she had so graciously paid me was for the purpose of buying her wedding-dress. It would be purposeless to describe my fury; I swore in my exalted rage that I would never look on the treacherous creature again. I could not think of any worse way of punishing her. But she survived. Twenty years later, when I was staying with my father and had gone rowing with him on the lake, I saw some ladies in a boat close by and asked him who they were. 'Why,' he exclaimed with a smile, 'doesn't your heart tell you? It's your old love, Mme Cristin – Mlle de Vulson she was.' I started at that almost forgotten name; but I told the boatman to change course. It was not worth while breaking my vow, and renewing a twenty-year-old quarrel with a woman of forty, though then I was in a very good position to take my revenge.

1723-1728 Thus, before my future career was decided, I wasted the most precious period of my childhood in foolishness. After lengthy discussions, however, as to my natural bent, they fixed on the profession for which I was least fitted, and sent me to M. Masseron, the City Registrar, to learn – as my Uncle Bernard put it – the profitable art of pettifogging. This term vastly displeased me; my proud nature was very little flattered by the prospect of earning a pile of money in ignoble ways. The job itself seemed unbearably boring; the hard work and obedience required repelled me even more, and I never entered the office without a feeling of disgust, which grew stronger with each day. M. Masseron, for his part, was displeased with me, treated me with contempt, and constantly

scolded me for my idleness and stupidity. Every day he told me afresh how my uncle had assured him that I was clever and knew a great deal, whereas really I did not know a thing. He had been promised a bright lad, he protested, and all he had got was a donkey. Finally I was ignominiously discharged from the office for my ineptitude, and M. Masseron's clerks proclaimed that all I was good for was to handle a watchmaker's file.

With my vocation thus decided I was apprenticed, though not to a watchmaker but to an engraver. The Registrar's contempt had completely humiliated me, and I obeyed without a murmur. M. Ducommun, my master, was an oafish, violent young man who managed in a very short time to quench all the fire of my childhood, and to coarsen my affection and lively nature; he reduced me in spirit as well as in fact to my true condition of apprentice. My Latin, my interest in history and antiquities, were for a long time forgotten; and I did not so much as remember that the Romans had ever existed. When I went to see my father he no longer treated me as his idol; and for the ladies I had ceased to be the gallant Jean-Jacques. I was so conscious, indeed, that M. and Mlle Lambercier would not have recognized me as their pupil, that I was ashamed to call on them and have not seen them since that day. The vilest tastes and the lowest habits took the place of my simple amusements, and soon not a memory of them was left. Despite my excellent upbringing, I must have had a strong inclination towards degeneracy; for I degenerated very rapidly, and without the least difficulty; never did a precocious Caesar so promptly become a Laridon.*

My trade did not displease me in itself. I had a strong taste for drawing, and quite enjoyed using etching tools. Furthermore engraving for the watch trade demands very limited talents, and I had hopes of attaining perfection. I should have succeeded indeed, if brutality and unreasonable restraint on the part of my master had not disgusted me with my work. I stole the time that should have been his, to spend it in occupations of a similar nature that had for me the attractions of liberty. I was engraving medals of a sort to serve me and my fellows as the insignia of an order of chivalry, when I was caught by my master at this illegal pursuit and severely beaten. He accused me of teaching myself to forge money, for these medals of ours bore the arms of the Republic. I can freely swear that I had no idea of false money, and very little of

* 'Oh! combien de Césars deviendront Laridons.' (How many Caesars will become low dogs.) La Fontaine.

true coin, and knew more about the making of Roman *denarii* than of our three *sou* bits.

My master's tyranny finally made a trade which I should have liked quite unbearable to me, and drove me to vices I should otherwise have despised, such as falsehood, idleness, and theft. Nothing has taught me better the difference between filial dependence and abject slavery than memory of the changes which this period worked in my character.

Being shy and timid by nature, there was no fault so foreign to my character as presumption. I had enjoyed simple liberty, which hitherto had only been restricted by degrees but which now completely vanished. I had been bold at home, free at M. Lambercier's and prudent at my uncle's; at my master's I was afraid, and from thenceforth I was a lost creature. I was used to living on terms of perfect equality with my elders; to knowing of no pleasures that were not within my grasp, to seeing no dish of which I did not have a share, to having no desires that I did not express; to letting every thought in my heart rise to my lips. Imagine my fate in a house where I dared not open my mouth, where I had to leave the table before the meal was half over, and the room as soon as I had no more duties to perform there. Continuously confined to my work, I saw enjoyments everywhere for other people and privations for me alone. The thought of the liberty in which the master and journeyman lived doubled the weight of my misery. When there were arguments on subjects about which I knew best I dared not open my mouth. Everything I saw about me I grew to covet in my heart, only because I was deprived of everything. There was an end to ease and gaiety and to those happy expressions that had often earned me exemption from punishment when I most richly deserved it. I cannot avoid a smile when I recall how one evening, at home, I was sent to bed without my supper for some piece of roguery, and as I passed through the kitchen with my miserable hunk of bread, saw and smelt the joint turning on the jack. My father and the others were standing in front of the fire and, as I went by, I had to say good-night to everyone. This ceremony over, I cast a sidelong glance at that joint, which looked and smelt so good that I could not help making it a bow too, and saying wretchedly, 'Good night, joint!' This display of naïveté so amused everyone that I was allowed to stay up for supper after all. Perhaps a similar remark would have had the same success at my master's, but I am sure that it would never have occurred to me or, if it had, that I would never have dared to make it.

So it was that I learnt to covet in silence, to conceal, to dissimulate,

to lie, and finally to steal – an idea that had never before come into my head and one that I have never been able entirely to rid myself of since. Unsatisfied desires always lead to that vice. That is why all lackeys are rogues and why all apprentices should be; though under quiet and equitable conditions, when everything they see is within their reach, these latter throw off the shameful propensity as they grow up. But my circumstances were not so happy, and I derived no such advantage from them.

It is nearly always generous feelings misdirected that lead a child into taking his first steps in crime. Notwithstanding privations and continuous temptation, I had been for more than a year with my master without ever making up my mind to take anything, even anything to eat. My first theft was out of mere compliance; but it opened the door to others which had no such laudable purpose.

There was a journeyman at my master's by the name of Verrat, whose mother lived in the neighbourhood and had a garden a considerable distance from her house where she grew very fine asparagus. Now it occurred to M. Verrat, who had not much money, to steal some of her asparagus when it was ready and sell it, thus realizing enough money for a good luncheon or two. As he was not very nimble and did not want to take the risk himself, he picked on me for the exploit. After some preliminary flattery, which seemed real enough to me since I did not know its purpose, he proposed the matter as if it were an idea that had just come into his head. I put up considerable opposition, but he persisted. I have never been able to resist flattery, and gave in. Every morning I went and cut the finest asparagus and took it to the Place du Molard, to some old woman who guessed that I had stolen it and told me so in order to get it cheaper. In my alarm, I accepted whatever she offered and took the money to M. Verrat. It was immediately turned into a lunch, which I went to fetch and which he shared with a comrade; as for me, I was content with what was left over. I did not even touch their wine.

This little business went on for several days without my so much as thinking of robbing the robber, and tithing the yield of M. Verrat's asparagus. I did my rascally job most faithfully for no other purpose than to please the man who made me do it. Yet if I had been caught I should have been exposed to all manner of beatings, abuse, and cruelty, while that wretch would have disowned me. For his word would have been taken against mine, and I should have received twice the punishment for having dared to accuse him, since he was a journeyman and I

only an apprentice. So it is that in every situation the powerful rogue protects himself at the expense of the feeble and innocent.

Thus I learnt that stealing was not so terrible as I had thought; and I soon turned my new knowledge to such good account that nothing I coveted and that was in my reach was safe from me. I was not exactly undernourished at my master's; the modesty of the fare was only painful to me when compared to the luxury he enjoyed. The custom of sending young people away from table when those dishes are brought on that tempt them most seems to me calculated to make them not only greedy but dishonest. I soon became both, and came off pretty well in general, though very badly when I was caught.

One memory of an apple-hunt that cost me dear still makes me shudder and laugh at the same time. These apples were at the bottom of a cupboard which was lit from the kitchen through a high lattice. One day when I was alone in the house I climbed on the kneading trough to peer into this garden of the Hesperides at those precious fruits I could not touch. Then I went to fetch the spit to see if it would reach; it was too short. So I lengthened it with one which was used for game – my master being very fond of hunting. I probed several times in vain, but at last I felt with delight that I was bringing up an apple. I raised it very gently, and was just on the point of grasping it. What was my grief to find that it was too big to pass the lattice! I resorted to the most ingenious devices to get it through. I had to find supports to keep the spit in position, a knife long enough to cut the apple in two, and a lath to hold it up. With time and perseverance I managed to divide it, and was in hopes of then bringing the pieces through one after the other. But the moment they were apart they both fell back into the cupboard. Kind reader, sympathize with me in my grief!

I did not lose courage, but I had lost a great deal of time, and was afraid of being caught. So I put off the attempt till next day, when I hoped to be more successful, and resumed my work as calmly as if I had done nothing wrong, without a thought for the two awkward witnesses testifying against me in the larder.

Next day, when the opportunity offered, I made a fresh attempt. I climbed on my perch, fastened the two spits together, straightened them, and was just going to probe. . . . But unfortunately the dragon was not asleep; the larder door suddenly opened; my master came out, folded his arms, looked at me, and said 'Bravo!' The pen falls from my hand.

Soon I had received so many beatings that I grew less sensitive to

them; in the end they seemed to me a sort of retribution for my thefts, which authorized me to go on stealing. Instead of looking back and thinking of my punishment, I looked forward and contemplated vengeance. I reckoned that to be beaten like a rogue justified my being one. I found that thieving and being beaten belonged together, and were in a sense a single state, and that if I fulfilled my share in the bargain by doing my part I could leave the responsibility for the rest to my master. In this assurance I began to thief with an easier conscience than before, saying to myself, 'Well, what will happen? I shall be beaten? All right, that's what I was made for.'

Without being greedy, I like my food. I am a sensualist but not a glutton; I have too many other tastes to distract me. I have never been concerned with my belly except when my heart has been disengaged, and that has been the case so seldom in my life that I have not had much time to think of tasty morsels. So I did not limit my thieving for long to food. Soon I extended my range to cover anything that tempted me; and if I did not become a real thief, it is because I have never been much tempted by money. Inside the common workshop my master had a separate one of his own which he kept locked. But I found a way of opening and shutting the door without leaving any trace. I took my toll of his best tools, drawings, and prints, and of everything I coveted and he wished to keep out of my grasp. Really the theft of these trifles was quite innocent, since I only took them to use in his service. But I was overjoyed to have them in my possession. For I imagined that by stealing them I acquired the skill to employ them. Besides these things, there were some boxes in his little workshop containing gold and silver filings, small jewels, valuable medals, and some small change. If I had four or five *sous* in my pocket, that was ample. So far from touching any of this, I do not remember ever even having cast a longing glance at it; in fact I was more alarmed than glad to find it there. I think that my horror of stealing money or valuables was largely the product of my education. It was associated in my mind with secret broodings upon disgrace, punishment, prison, and the scaffold, that would have made me shudder even had I been tempted. For my exploits seemed to me no more than idle pranks, and indeed they were nothing more. All they could lead to was a good thrashing from my master, and I prepared myself for that in advance.

But once again my covetousness was not sufficiently serious for me to hold back; there seemed no cause to struggle with myself. A single sheet of drawing-paper tempted me more than the money to buy a

ream. This strange desire is connected with one of the principal facets in my character, which has had considerable influence on my conduct and which it is important to explain.

My passions are extremely strong, and while I am under their sway nothing can equal my impetuosity. I am amenable to no restraint, respect, fear, or decorum. I am cynical, bold, violent, and daring. No shame can stop me, no fear of danger alarm me. Except for the one object in my mind the universe for me is non-existent. But all this lasts only a moment; and the next moment plunges me into complete annihilation. Catch me in a calm mood, I am all indolence and timidity. Everything alarms me, everything discourages me. I am frightened by a buzzing fly. I am too lazy to speak a word or make a gesture. So much am I a slave to fears and shames that I long to vanish from mortal sight. If action is necessary I do not know what to do; if I must speak I do not know what to say; if anyone looks at me I drop my eyes. When roused by passion, I can sometimes find the right words to say, but in ordinary conversation I can find none, none at all. I find conversation unbearable owing to the very fact that I am obliged to speak.

Furthermore, none of my dominant desires are for things that can be bought. All I need are simple pleasures, and money poisons them all. I am fond, for example, of a good meal, but cannot stand the boredom of polite company or the gross manners of an inn. I can only enjoy eating with a friend; when I am alone it is impossible, because my imagination is always busy with something else and I take no pleasure in my food. If the fire in my blood demands women, the emotion in my heart cries more loudly for love. Women who could be bought would lose all their charm for me. I doubt whether I could even take advantage of the situation. It is the same with all pleasures within my reach. If they are not to be had for nothing, they have no attraction for me. The only things I like are things that belong to no one but the first person who knows how to enjoy them.

Money has never seemed to me as precious as people think it. Indeed it has never seemed to me very useful. For it has no value in itself and must be transformed to be enjoyed. One must bargain and purchase and often be cheated, paying dear for poor services. I want an article of quality; but my money is sure to obtain a poor one. I pay a lot for a new laid egg, and it proves stale; for a ripe fruit, and it is green; for a girl, and she is debauched. I enjoy good wine, but where can I get it? At a wine merchant's? Notwithstanding all my precautions he will poison me. Supposing I insist on getting what I want. What trouble

and embarrassment I must put myself to! I must use friends and correspondents, give orders, write, go hither and thither, wait; and often I shall be cheated in the end. What a trouble my money is! I am not fond enough of good wine to disturb myself to that extent.

Countless times, during my apprenticeship and since, I have gone out with the idea of buying some dainty. As I come to the pastry-cook's I catch sight of the women behind the counter and can already imagine them laughing amongst themselves and making fun of the greedy youngster. Then I pass a fruiterer's, and look at the ripe pears out of the corner of my eye; the scent of them tempts me. But two or three young people over there are looking at me; a man I know is standing in front of the shop; I can see a girl coming in the distance. Is not she our maidservant? My short sight is constantly deceiving me. I take everyone who passes for someone I know. I am frightened by everything and discover obstacles everywhere. As my discomfort grows my desire increases. But in the end I go home like an idiot, consumed by longing and with money enough in my pocket to satisfy it, but not having dared to buy anything.

I should involve myself in the most boring details were I to continue on the subject of my money and its spending – by me or by other people – and to relate all the embarrassment and shame, the repugnance and discomfort and repulsion I have always felt in regard to it. But as the reader learns more of my life, he will get to know my disposition and feel all this for himself without my needing to tell him.

Once this is clear, he will have no difficulty in understanding one of the apparent contradictions in my character: the combination of an almost sordid avarice with the greatest contempt for money. It is a commodity that I find so unmanageable that it does not even occur to me to desire it when I have not got it, and when I have it I keep it for a long while without spending it, since I never know how to use it satisfactorily. But if an agreeable and convenient occasion arises I make such good use of it that my purse is empty before I have noticed it. Do not expect to find in me, however, that peculiarity of misers – spending in order to make a display. On the contrary I spend in secret and for pleasure. Far from calling attention to my spending, I conceal it. I am so conscious that money is not for me that I am almost ashamed of having any and still more ashamed of employing it. If I had ever had a sufficient income to live comfortably I should never have been tempted to be miserly, I am quite sure. I should have spent my whole income and never tried to increase it. But my precarious position always frightens

me. I love liberty; I hate embarrassment, worry, and constraint. So long as the money lasts in my purse, it assures me of independence and relieves me of the need of plotting to obtain more, a need which has always appalled me. So afraid am I to see it end that I treasure it. Money in one's possession is the instrument of liberty; money one pursues is the symbol of servitude. That is why I hold fast to what I have, but covet no more.

My disinterestedness, therefore, is a sign of indolence; the pleasure of possession is not worth the trouble involved in acquisition. And my mad spending is a sign of indolence too; when the occasion for spending agreeably arises, too much use cannot be made of it. I am less tempted by money than by things, because between money and the desired object there is always an intermediary, whereas between a thing and its enjoyment there is none. If I see something, it tempts me. But if all I see is the way of acquiring it, I am not tempted. I have been a thief, and sometimes I still steal trifles that tempt me, and that I had rather take than ask for. But, in youth or age, I do not remember ever having taken a farthing from anyone, except on one occasion, almost fifteen years ago, when I stole seven *livres* ten *sous*. The incident is worth the telling, for it involves such an absurd mixture of boldness and stupidity that I should find it most difficult to believe if it concerned anyone but myself.

It was in Paris. I was walking, at about five o'clock, with M. de Francueil in the Palais-Royal when he took out his watch, looked at it, and said, 'Let us go to the Opera.' I agreed, and we went. He bought two tickets for the amphitheatre, gave me one and went on ahead with the other. I followed him in, but on reaching the doorway found it congested. When I looked in, I saw that everyone was standing. So, thinking I might easily be lost in the crowd, or at least make M. de Francueil think so, I went out again, presented my ticket, asked for my money back, and walked away. But what I had not suspected was that the moment I got to the door everyone sat down and M. de Francueil clearly perceived that I was no longer there.

Nothing could have been so far from my natural disposition as this act. But I note it as a proof that there are moments of a kind of delirium, in which men cannot be judged by what they do. I did not exactly steal that money. What I stole was the use of it. But it was a theft and, what is more, it was a disgraceful one.

I should never finish this story were I to follow out every occasion during my apprenticeship on which I passed from sublime heroism to

the depths of villainy. However, though I assumed the vices of my station, I found it impossible to acquire a taste for them. My comrades' amusements bored me; and when too much constraint made my work repulsive too, I grew weary of everything. In that state I re-acquired my love of reading, which I had long ago lost. The time for books I stole from my work, and that brought me fresh punishments. But, spurred on by opposition, this taste soon became a furious passion. Mme La Tribu's famous lending library provided reading of all sorts. Good or bad was alike to me. I did not choose, I read everything with equal avidity. I read at my bench, I read on errands, I read in the lavatory, and was oblivious of myself for hours on end. I read till my head spun, I did nothing but read. My master spied on me, caught me, beat me, and took away my books. How many volumes were torn up, burnt, and thrown out of the window! How many works returned to Mme La Tribu's shelves with volumes missing! When I had no money to pay her, I gave her my shirts, my ties, my clothes; my weekly pocket-money of three *sous* was carried to her regularly every Sunday.

There, it may be said, is a case where money became necessary. That is true, but it was at a moment when reading had cut down every activity. Given over entirely to my new craze, I did nothing but read; I gave up stealing. This is another of my characteristic contradictions. When I am in a certain mood a trifle distracts me, changes me, captures me, and becomes a passion. Then I forget everything, and think only of the new subject of interest. My heart throbbed with impatience to turn over the pages of the new book I had in my pocket. I took it out as soon as I was alone, and had no longer a thought of ransacking my master's private workshop. I cannot even imagine that I should have stolen even if I had had a more expensive craze. Being confined in the moment, it was not in my nature thus to provide for the future. Mme La Tribu gave me credit, the deposit she asked was small, and once I had a book in my pocket I did not give another thought for anything. The money that came to me in the natural way passed in the same way to her; and when she became pressing nothing came more readily to hand than my own clothes. Stealing in advance involved too much foresight; and stealing to pay her wasn't even a temptation.

What with rows and beatings and ill-selected and secret reading, my temper became wild and taciturn. My mind was beginning to be perverted and I lived like an outlaw. But if my taste did not preserve me from dull and tasteless books, my luck saved me from the obscene and

licentious. Not that Mme La Tribu, a most accommodating woman in every way, had any scruples about lending me them. But the air of mystery she assumed in recommending them absolutely compelled me, out of mingled discomfort and disgust, to refuse them. What is more, luck so favoured my modesty in this respect that I was more than thirty before I even glanced at one of those dangerous works which even fashionable ladies find so embarrassing that they can only read them in secret.

In less than a year I exhausted Mme La Tribu's small library, and found myself most distressingly at a loss in my spare time. I was cured of my childish follies and youthful rogueries by my craze for reading, and even by what I read. For, ill-chosen and often bad though these books were, they nevertheless kindled my heart to nobler feelings than my condition inspired in me. Revolted by everything within my reach, and feeling that anything which might have attracted me was too far away, I saw nothing that could possibly stir my heart. My senses, which had been roused long ago, demanded delights of which I could not even guess the nature. I was as far from the reality as if I had been entirely lacking in sexuality. My senses were already mature, and I sometimes thought of my past eccentricities, but I could not see beyond them. In this strange situation my restless imagination took a hand which saved me from myself and calmed my growing sensuality. What it did was to nourish itself on situations that had interested me in my reading, recalling them, varying them, combining them, and giving me so great a part in them, that I became one of the characters I imagined, and saw myself always in the pleasantest situations of my own choosing. So, in the end, the fictions I succeeded in building up made me forget my real condition, which so dissatisfied me. My love for imaginary objects and my facility in lending myself to them ended by disillusioning me with everything around me, and determined that love of solitude which I have retained ever since that time. There will be more than one example in what follows of the strange effects of that trait in my character which seems so gloomy and misanthropic. In fact, however, it arises from my too loving heart, from my too tender and affectionate nature, which find no living creatures akin to them, and so are forced to feed upon fictions. I am satisfied for the moment to have indicated the origin and prime cause of an inclination which has modified all my passions, and restrained them by making use of those very passions to curb themselves. So it is that I have been slow in accomplishment through excess of desire.

Finally I reached the age of sixteen, restless and dissatisfied with myself and everything else, without any taste for my work, racked with desires I did not understand, weeping when I had no cause for tears and sighing I knew not why – tenderly nursing my illusions, in brief, since I saw nothing around me that I valued as much. On Sundays my comrades came to fetch me, after service, to go out and amuse myself with them. I would gladly have avoided them if I could. But once I took part in their games I was keener and more adventurous than any of them. Hard to rouse and hard to restrain: that had been a constant trait in my character. When we went walking outside the city I always ran ahead, and never dreamt of returning unless someone else dreamt of it for me. Twice I was caught, and the gates were shut before I could reach them. You can imagine how I was punished next day. On the second occasion indeed I was promised such a welcome if there were a third that I decided not to run the risk. Nevertheless the dreaded third time came. All my precautions were rendered nugatory by a wretched Captain Minutoli, who always closed the gates on his nights of duty half an hour before the others. I was returning with two comrades. A mile and a half from the city I heard the sound of the tattoo and increased my pace. Then I heard the drum-roll and ran my hardest. I arrived out of breath and bathed in sweat, my heart pounding. I saw from the distance that the soldiers were at their posts. I ran up and shouted breathlessly. It was too late. When I was twenty paces away I saw them raise the first bridge. I trembled as I watched its dreadful horns rising in the air, a sinister and fatal augury of the inevitable fate which from that moment awaited me.

In the first access of my grief I threw myself down on the grass and bit the earth. My companions merely laughed at my misfortune and immediately decided what to do. I made up my mind also, but in another sense. There and then I decided never to return to my master; and next day, as they returned to the city at the hour when the gates were opened, I bade them farewell for ever. I asked them only to inform my cousin Bernard, in secret, of the resolution I had taken, and to tell him where he could meet me for the last time.

Being somewhat estranged from him since I had entered on my apprenticeship I was seeing him less. Nevertheless for some time we had been meeting on Sundays. But, little by little, each of us was altering his habits and we met now more rarely. I believe that his mother had some hand in this change. He was a lad of the upper town; I was a poor apprentice, a mere child of the Saint-Gervais quarter. There was

no longer any equality between us despite our equal birth. It was demeaning for him to go about with me. Nevertheless relations had not been absolutely broken off between us; and, being a good-natured lad, he often followed his feelings in despite of his mother's instructions. When he heard of my plan he hurried to me, not in order to dissuade me or to share in my adventure, but by a few trifling presents to ease the hardships of my flight. For my own resources could not carry me very far. Among other things he gave me a small sword, which greatly took my fancy, and which I carried as far as Turin, where want forced me to dispose of it and where, as they say, I consumed it. But the more I have thought over the way he behaved to me at that critical moment, the more persuaded I am that he was following his mother's instructions and perhaps his father's as well. For it is impossible that, left to himself, he would not have made some effort to hold me back, or that he would not have been tempted to follow me. But instead of restraining me he encouraged me in my plan; and then, when he saw that I had quite made up my mind, he left me without many tears. We have neither written to one another nor seen one another since. It is sad; for he was an essentially good person, and we were made to be friends.

Before I abandon myself to my fatal destiny, let me turn for a moment to the prospect that would normally have awaited me had I fallen into the hands of a better master. Nothing suited my character better, nor was more likely to make me happy than the calm and obscure life of a good craftsman, particularly in a superior trade like that of an engraver at Geneva. The work, which was lucrative enough to yield a man an easy subsistence but not sufficiently rewarding to lead to fortune, would have limited my ambition till the end of my days and have left me honest leisure wherein to cultivate simple tastes. It would have kept me in my sphere, and offered me no means of escaping from it. Since my imagination was rich enough to embellish any state with illusions, and powerful enough to transport me, so to speak, according to my whim, from one state to another, it mattered very little to me in what walk of life I actually was. Never mind how great the distance between my position and the nearest castle in Spain, I had no difficulty in taking up residence there. It followed, therefore, that the simplest of situations, the one that demanded the least trouble and exertion, the one that left the mind most free, was the most suitable for me; and that was precisely the situation I was then in. I should have passed a calm and peaceful life in the security of my faith, in my own country, among my family and friends. That was what my peculiar

character required, a life spent in the uniform pursuit of a trade I had chosen, and in a society after my own heart. I should have been a good Christian, a good citizen, a good father, a good friend, a good workman, a good man in every way. I should have been happy in my condition, and should perhaps have been respected. Then, after a life – simple and obscure, but also mild and uneventful – I should have died peacefully in the bosom of my family. Soon, no doubt, I should have been forgotten, but at least I should have been mourned for as long as I was remembered.

But instead . . . what a picture I have to paint! But do not let us anticipate the miseries of my life. I shall have only too much to say to my readers on that melancholy subject.

BOOK TWO

1728-1731

Terrible though the moment had appeared in which fear prompted me to fly, when the time came to carry out my plan I found it quite delightful. Although no more than a child, to leave my country and my relations and everyone who might sustain or support me; to throw up an apprenticeship half completed without knowing my trade well enough to live by it; to incur the miseries of poverty without any means of ending them; in the weakness and innocence of my youth to expose myself to all the temptations of vice and despair; to court evils, errors, traps, slavery, and death in a distant land, beneath a far less merciful yoke than the one I had just found intolerable: that was what I was about to do, that was the perspective which I should have envisaged. How different was the future I imagined! The only thought in my mind was the independence I believed I had won. Now that I was free and my own master, I supposed that I could do anything, achieve anything. I had only to take one leap, and I could rise and fly through the air. I marched confidently out into the world's wide spaces. Soon they would be filled with my fame. Everywhere I went I should find feastings, treasures, and adventures, friends ready to help me and mistresses eager to do my pleasure. The moment I showed myself the universe would be busy with my concerns. Not the whole universe, however. I could to some extent do without that; I did not require so much. One charming circle would be enough; more would be an embarrassment. Modestly I imagined myself one of a narrow but exquisitely chosen clan, over which I felt confident that I should rule. A single castle was the limit of my ambition. To be the favourite of its lord and lady, the lover of their daughter, the friend of their son, and protector of their neighbours: that would be enough; I required no more. In expectation of this modest future I wandered for some days around the city, staying with peasants whom I knew, all of whom received me with greater kindness than townsfolk would have shown me. They welcomed me, lodged me, and fed me too spontaneously to take any credit for it. This could not be called charity; it was not done with sufficient condescension for that.

In my globe-trotting adventures I got as far as Conflignon, in Savoy

country some six miles from Geneva. The priest there was M. de Pontverre, a name famous in the history of the Republic, which greatly impressed me. I was curious to see what a descendant of the Gentlemen of the Spoon* looked like, and so went to see him. He received me kindly, talked to me of the Genevan heresy with all the authority of Mother Church, and entertained me to dinner. I could find little to say in answer to arguments which ended on that note, and decided that priests who dined one so well were at least the equal of our ministers. I had certainly more learning than M. de Pontverre, nobleman though he was; but I was too good a guest to dispute his theology; and his Frangi wine, which I thought excellent, argued so triumphantly on his side that I should have blushed to contradict so good a host. So I gave in, or rather declined the contest. To judge from my tactics, indeed, a casual observer would have thought me a dissembler. But he would have been wrong. I was no more than grateful, of that I am certain. Flattery, or rather conciliation, is not always a vice. It is more often a virtue, especially in young people. Kind treatment from a man endears him to us. We do not give in for the purpose of deceiving him, but so as not to upset him, not to return evil for good. What interest could M. de Pontverre have in receiving me, and entertaining me so well, and trying to convince me? None except my own good, my young heart told me. I was moved by gratitude and respect for that good priest. I felt my own superiority and, as a reward for his hospitality, I did not wish to overwhelm him with it.

There was no motive of hypocrisy behind my conduct; I never thought for a moment of changing my faith. So far was I, in fact, from speedily reconciling myself to the idea that I could not envisage it without horror. That horror, indeed, as events proved, kept the whole business at a distance for a long time. All I wanted was not to upset people who were being kind to me with that end in view. I wanted to cultivate their benevolence, and leave them some hopes of success, by appearing to be less well armed than I really was. My crime, in that respect, was like an honest woman's coquetry. For sometimes, to gain her ends she will, without permitting any liberties or making any promises, raise more hopes than she intends to fulfil.

Common sense, pity, and decency surely demanded that instead of encouraging my follies, they should have saved me from the ruin I was

* A group of Catholic noblemen who in 1527 swore to eat the people of Geneva 'with a spoon', and wore one round their necks to remind them of their oath. They made several attacks upon the city.

courting and have sent me back to my family. That is what any man of real virtue should have done, or tried to do. But though M. de Pontverre was a kind man he certainly was not a good man. On the contrary, he was a fanatic who knew no other virtue than the worship of his images and the telling of his beads; a kind of missionary who could imagine no better way of serving his faith than libelling the ministers of Geneva. Far from thinking of sending me home, he took such advantage of my desire to run away as to make it impossible for me to go back even if I had wanted to. There was every probability that he was sending me to perish of hunger or to become a vagabond. He did not care about that. What he saw was a soul to be plucked from heresy and reconciled to the Church. Honest man or vagabond, what did that matter so long as I went to Mass? It must not be supposed, however, that this way of thinking is confined to Catholics. It is common to every dogmatic religion which makes faith the essential, not deeds.

‘God is calling you,’ said M. de Pontverre. ‘Go to Annecy. There you will find a good and charitable lady, whom the King, of his bounty, has empowered to save other souls from the error under which she once laboured herself.’ He was speaking of Mme de Warens, a recent convert, who was more or less compelled by the priests to share a pension of two thousand francs allowed her by the King of Sardinia, with any riff-raff that came to trade their religion for money. I felt greatly humiliated at standing in need of a good and charitable woman. What I wanted was to be given my bare necessities, but not to receive alms, and the idea of a pious lady did not much attract me. But urged on by M. de Pontverre, hard pressed by hunger, and glad too to be setting out on a journey with an end in view, I made up my mind, though with some difficulty, and departed for Annecy. I could easily have got there in one day, but I did not hurry; I took three.

I did not see a castle on the left or the right without setting off to seek the adventure which I was sure awaited me there. I neither dared to enter nor yet to knock, for I was exceedingly timid. But I sang under what looked the likeliest window, and was very surprised after singing my loudest for a considerable time to see no ladies or maidens appear, attracted by the beauty of my voice or by the wit of my songs. For I knew some good songs, which I had learnt from my comrades and which I sang extremely well.

Finally I arrived and saw Mme de Warens. This stage in my life has been decisive in the formation of my character, and I cannot make up my mind to pass lightly over it. I was half way through my sixteenth

year and, without being what is called a handsome youth, I was well-made for my modest size, had a pretty foot, a fine leg, an independent air, lively features, a small mouth, black eyebrows and hair, and small, rather sunken eyes which sparkled with the fire that burnt in my veins. Unfortunately I knew nothing of all this. For all my life I have never thought of my appearance until the moment has passed for turning it to account. So the timidity natural to my years was heightened by my very affectionate nature, which was always troubled by the fear of displeasing. Moreover, whilst I had a fairly cultivated mind, never having seen the world, I was quite innocent of good manners; and my education, far from remedying this defect, merely increased my nervousness by making me conscious of my shortcomings.

Fearing therefore that my appearance did not speak in my favour, I sought my advantage in other ways. I wrote a fine letter in a rhetorical style, mingling phrases from books with the language of an apprentice, thus endeavouring with all my eloquence to win Mme de Warens's favour. With this letter I enclosed M. de Pontverre's and set out to make the dreaded call. I did not find Mme de Warens in, but was told that she had just left to go to church. It was Palm Sunday in the year 1728. I ran after her, saw her, caught her up, and spoke to her. Indeed I ought to remember the place, for often since I have bathed it with my tears and smothered it with kisses. I should like to surround that happy spot with railings of gold, and make it an object of universal veneration. Whoever delights to honour the memorials of man's salvation should approach it only on his knees.

It was a passage behind her house, with a stream on the right dividing it from her garden, and a yard wall on the left. It led by a private door into the Franciscan church. As she was about to enter that door I called. Mme de Warens turned back. How the sight of her affected me! I had expected M. de Pontverre's 'good lady' to be a disagreeable and pious old woman; to my mind, she could not be otherwise. But what I saw was a face full of charm, large and lovely blue eyes beaming with kindness, a dazzling complexion and the outline of an enchanting neck. Nothing escaped the rapid glance of the young proselyte. For in a moment I was hers, and certain that a faith preached by such missionaries would not fail to lead to paradise. She smiled as she took the letter that I held out to her with a trembling hand. She opened it, glanced over M. de Pontverre's enclosure, came to mine, and read it all through. Indeed she would have read it through again if her footman had not warned that it was time to go into church. 'Well, my child,' she said to me in a

voice that made me start, 'you're very young to go wandering about the country. It's a shame, really it is.' Then without waiting for my reply, she added, 'Go to my house and wait for me there. Tell them to give you some breakfast. After mass I'll come and talk to you.'

Louise Éléonore de Warens was of the noble and ancient family of La Tour de Pil, of Vévai in the Pays de Vaud. When very young, she had married M. de Warens of the house of Loys, the eldest son of M. de Villardin of Lausanne. This marriage had been childless and not too happy. There had been domestic troubles, and Mme de Warens had taken the opportunity of King Victor-Amadeus's visit to Evian to cross the lake and throw herself at his feet, thus abandoning her husband, her family, and her country with an impetuosity similar to mine, and which she too had plenty of leisure to regret. The King, who loved to display his zeal for Catholicism, took her under his protection, gave her a pension of fifteen hundred Piedmontese *livres*, which was a great deal for a prince who was no spendthrift and, seeing that his liberality made people suppose him to be in love with her, sent her to Annecy, under the escort of a detachment of his guards. There, under the direction of Michel-Gabriel de Bernex, titular bishop of Geneva, she forswore her faith at the convent of the Visitation.

She had been at Annecy six years* when I arrived, and she was then twenty-eight, having been born with the century. Her beauty was of a kind that endures, lying more in the expression than in the features; and so it was still at its height. Her manner was tender and caressing, her gaze was very mild, her smile angelic, her mouth small like mine, her hair, which was ash blond and extraordinarily plentiful, she wore with an affected negligence that increased her attraction. She was small in stature, almost short, and rather stout, though not in an ungainly way; but a lovelier head, a lovelier throat, lovelier hands, and lovelier arms it would have been impossible to find.

Her education had been extremely mixed. Like me, she had lost her mother at birth, and had seized indiscriminately on any instruction that was offered her. She had learnt a little from her governess, a little from her father, a little from her masters and a great deal from her lovers, particularly from M. de Tavel who, having both knowledge and taste, bestowed some of each on the women he loved. But such varieties of instruction acted against one another, and her failure to put them in order prevented her various studies from broadening her natural intelligence. So, though she knew some elements of philosophy

[* Actually only two.]

and physics, she did not fail to pick up her father's taste for experimental medicine and alchemy; she manufactured elixirs, tinctures, balsams, and magic potions; she pretended to have secret knowledge. Charlatans took advantage of her weakness to pester her, impose on her, and ruin her. With their crucibles and their drugs they destroyed her intellect, her talents, and her charms, with which she could have delighted the finest society.

But though these sordid wretches took advantage of her ill-directed education to obscure the lights of her reason, her excellent heart withstood these trials and remained unchanged. Her mild and affectionate nature, her sympathy with the unfortunate, her inexhaustible kindness, her free and frank gaiety, never varied; and even when old age drew near and she was a victim to poverty, illness, and various calamities, that serene and lovely soul maintained till the end of her life all the gay humours of her prime.

Her errors arose from an inexhaustible fund of activity, which perpetually demanded employment. A woman's intrigues did not satisfy her; what she required were enterprises to carry out and direct. She was born for affairs of state. In her place Mme de Longueville would have been a mere intriguer; in Mme de Longueville's place, she would have ruled France. Her talents were misplaced. What might have won her glory in a more exalted station worked her ruin in the position in which she lived. When dealing with affairs within her scope she always planned on a large and theoretical scale, viewing her object as greater than its true size. The result was that she employed means in proportion to her dreams rather than to her strength, and failed through the fault of others. Then, when her project came to grief she was ruined, where anyone else in her place would hardly have lost anything. Her taste for business, which did her so much harm, did her at least one good service, when she was in her monastic retreat. It prevented her from staying there for the rest of her days, as she was tempted to do. The simple and uniform life of the nuns, with its parlour gossip, could never satisfy a mind which was always working, which formed new projects each day and needed freedom to devote herself to them. The good Bishop of Bernex was less intelligent than François de Sales, but resembled him in many ways; and Mme de Warens, whom he called his daughter, and who resembled Mme de Chantal in many ways also, might have imitated her in her retreat if her tastes had not tempted her away from the idleness of a nunnery. It was not because she lacked zeal that this charming woman did not give

herself up to every minor detail of devotion which seemed proper in a fresh convert, living under a priest's direction. Whatever the motives of her change in religion, she was sincere in the faith that she had embraced. She may have regretted having made a mistake, but she had no desire to repair it. She not only died a good Catholic, but genuinely lived as one; and I can testify – for I think I understood her to the bottom of her soul – that it was only out of dislike for religious hypocrites that she never displayed her piety in public. Her faith was too well-founded for her to play the devotee. But this is not the place for me to enlarge on her principles; I shall have other occasions to speak of them. Let those who deny the affinity of souls explain, if they can, how from our first meeting, our first word, our first glance, Mme de Warens inspired me not only with the strongest affection, but with a perfect confidence, which has never proved misplaced. Supposing that what I felt for her was really love – which will appear at least doubtful to anyone who follows the story of our relationship – how could that passion have been accompanied from its birth with the kind of feelings most foreign to love, with peace of heart, calmness, serenity, security, confidence? How, on meeting a charming woman for the first time, a polished and attractive woman superior to myself in rank, a woman unlike any I had ever spoken to before, a woman on whom my fate to some extent hung – for I was dependent on the amount of interest she might feel in me – how was it then, taking all this into account, that I felt as carefree and as much at my ease as if I were perfectly certain to please her? Why did I not have a moment's embarrassment, timidity, or concern? I was bashful by nature, easily put out of countenance, and had never seen the world. How was it then that from the first day, the first instant, I assumed the easy manner, the affectionate language and familiar tone of ten years later, of a time when the greatest intimacy had made it natural? Is there such a thing as love, not without desire – for desire I had – but without disquietude and jealousy? Does one not wish at least to learn from the woman one loves whether one is loved in return? That is a question that it has no more occurred to me, even once in my life, to ask her, than to ask myself whether I loved her; and never did she express any greater curiosity in regard to me. There was certainly something peculiar about my feelings for this charming woman, and the reader will find, as he reads on, that strange and unexpected developments attended them.

The question was what was to become of me, and in order to discuss it at greater leisure she kept me to dinner. That was the first meal in

my life at which my appetite failed me. Her maid, who served us, remarked indeed that she had never before seen a traveller of my age and appearance who was not hungry. This observation did not harm me in my mistress's eyes, but it struck home on a great oaf who was dining with us, and who consumed unaided what would have been a square meal for six. I was in a state of rapture myself, which would not permit me to eat. My heart was feasting upon a new feeling which filled my whole being, leaving me no thought for any other activities.

Mme de Warens asked for all the details of my little tale, and I recovered, as I told it, all the fire I had lost at my master's. The more I interested that kind soul on my behalf, the more she deplored the fate I was about to expose myself to. Her air, her looks, her gestures, all expressed a strong compassion. She dared not exhort me to return to Geneva; in her position that would have been treason against the Catholic faith, and she was not unaware that she was under close surveillance, that her every speech was weighed. But she spoke to me so feelingly of my father's distress that it was quite clear she would have approved of my going back to console him. She did not know how strongly, though unwittingly, she was pleading against herself. Not only was my mind made up – as I think I have already said – but the more eloquent and persuasive I found her, the more touched I was by her speeches, the less could I bear to tear myself away from her. I knew that to return to Geneva was to place an almost insurmountable barrier between her and myself; unless, indeed, I were to repeat the action I had just taken. It would be best, therefore, to adhere to my purpose, and to it I adhered. Seeing that her endeavours were in vain, Mme de Warens did not push them so far as to commit herself. She merely said to me with a look of pity: 'My poor child, you must go where God calls you. But when you grow up you will remember me.' I do not think she imagined for a moment that her prophecy would be so cruelly fulfilled.

The difficulty remained quite unsolved. How could I earn my living at my age away from my home? I was only half way through my apprenticeship and was a long way from fully skilled. But even if I had known my trade I could not have lived by it in Savoy, which was too poor a country to support craftsmanship. The oafish fellow who was eating for us, having to make a pause to rest his jaws, began to offer advice which he said was of heavenly inspiration, but which, to judge by its consequences, more likely emanated from the opposite place. He suggested that I should go to Turin, where I would receive spiritual

and temporal sustenance in a hostel established for the instruction of converts. Then, when I had entered the bosom of the Church I should find, through the charity of worthy souls, some place that would suit me. 'As for the cost of his journey,' the fellow continued, 'if Madame proposes this holy work to his Highness Monseigneur the Bishop, he will most certainly find it in his heart to contribute to it. And Madame la Baronne, who is so charitable,' he added, bending over his plate, 'will of course be eager to make a contribution as well.'

I found all this charity most displeasing. But despite my sinking heart I said nothing. Mme de Warens did not receive the plan with quite the ardour of its proposer. She merely replied that everyone should contribute to good works according to his powers, and that she would speak to Monseigneur. But this confounded man was afraid that she might not speak quite as he wished and, having some slight interest in the business, hurried to put the matter to the almoner. So well did he prime the good priests, indeed, that when Mme de Warens, who had her fears about my journey, made up her mind to speak to the bishop, she found that everything had already been arranged. He immediately handed her the money for my modest travelling expenses, and she dared not talk of my remaining. For I was approaching an age at which a woman of her years could not decently attempt to keep a young man in her house.

My journey being thus determined by my new guardians, I had to submit; which I did without great repugnance. Though Turin was farther away than Geneva I supposed that, being the capital, it would be in closer contact with Annecy than would a city under a different government and of a different religion. Then, since it was at Mme de Warens's command that I departed, I regarded myself as still living under her direction; which was more important than living beside her. Furthermore, the idea of a long journey fell in with my passion for wandering, which was already beginning to assert itself. I looked forward to the prospect of crossing the mountains while still so young, and rising superior to my comrades by the full height of the Alps. To see the world is a temptation that no Genevese can easily resist. So I consented to their plan. The oafish fellow was to leave in two days' time with his wife. I was confided and recommended to their care, and my purse was entrusted to them also. Mme de Warens had added something to the amount the bishop had put in it, and had secretly given me a little fund together with copious instructions. On the Wednesday in Passion Week we set out.

The day after I left Annecy my father arrived in pursuit of me with a M. Rival, a friend and fellow watchmaker, a man of some parts, of fine parts even, who wrote better verses than La Motte and was as good a talker as he. What is more, he was a thoroughly good man; but all that his misplaced zeal for literature did was to turn one of his sons into an actor.

Together they saw Mme de Warens, but were content to join with her in deploring my fate, instead of following me and catching me up, as they could easily have done, they being on horseback and I on foot. The same thing had happened to my Uncle Bernard; he had come as far as Confignon and, learning there that I was at Annecy, had turned back to Geneva. It seemed that my relations were conspiring with my stars to deliver me to the fate that awaited me. By a similar negligence my brother had been lost, so finally lost indeed that it has never been known what became of him.

My father was not only an honourable man, he was a man of scrupulous integrity, and possessed that strength of mind that makes for true virtue. What is more he was a good father, at least to me. He loved me very dearly, but he also loved his pleasures, and other affections had somewhat cooled his paternal feelings since I had been living away. He had married again at Nyon; and though his wife was no longer of an age to give me brothers, she had relations; and that made another family, other surroundings, and a new household, which caused him to think of me less often. My father was ageing, and had not the means to support his old age. My brother and I had inherited some property from my mother, the income from which would fall to my father in our absence. The thought of this did not affect him directly, or prevent his doing his duty. But it acted upon him obscurely without his being conscious of it himself and sometimes restrained his zeal, which otherwise would have been more extreme. That, I think, is the reason why, having traced me as far as Annecy, he did not pursue me to Chambéry, where he was morally certain to catch me up. That is the reason why, though I have often been to see him since I ran away, and have always been received with paternal affection, he has never made any great effort to keep me with him.

This behaviour in a father of whose goodness and affection I am convinced, has caused me to reflect on my own conduct; and my reflections have had no small share in preserving the integrity of my conduct. They have taught me one great maxim of morality, the only one perhaps which is of practical use: to avoid situations which place

our duties in opposition to our interests, and show us where another man's loss spells profit to us. For I am sure that, in such situations, however sincere and virtuous the motives we start with, sooner or later and unconsciously we weaken, and become wicked and unjust in practice, though still remaining good and just in our hearts.

I have carried this maxim firmly imprinted on my heart and applied it, although somewhat late in the day, to all my conduct. It has been one of the principal causes, indeed, of my seeming so foolish and strange in public, particularly in the eyes of my acquaintances. I have been accused of trying to be original and of acting unlike other people, though really I have hardly even thought whether I was acting like others or unlike them. My sincere wish has been to do what was right, and I have strenuously avoided all situations which might set my interests in opposition to some other man's, and cause me, even despite myself, to wish him ill.

Two years ago my Lord Marshal* wanted to put my name in his will. But I protested with all my strength, saying that I would not for anything in the world be aware that I was remembered in anyone's will, and still less in his. He gave in, and now he has been pleased to settle an annuity on me, to which I do not object. You may say that this change is to my advantage. That may well be. But, my dear benefactor and father, I now know that if I survive you I have everything to lose and nothing to gain by your death.

That, in my opinion, is good philosophy, the one philosophy really proper to the human heart, and every day I delve deeper into its solid riches. I have incorporated it in different ways in all my recent writings. But the light-headed public has failed to recognize it. If I survive the completion of my present enterprise long enough, however, I intend to give, in the sequel to *Émile*, such an attractive and striking illustration of this same maxim that my reader will be forced to take notice of it. But I have reflected enough for a traveller; it is time now to return to the road.

The journey was much more pleasant than I might have supposed, nor was my companion as oafish as he appeared. He was a man of middle years, who wore his greying black hair in a pig-tail, had a martial air, a loud voice, and considerable gaiety. He walked well, ate even better, and practised all sorts of trades without being skilled in one of them. He had a project for setting up some kind of manufacturing at Annecy; and Mme de Warens, of course, had backed his idea. Now

[* Marshal Keith, of whom more is told in the Twelfth Book.]

he was making the journey to Turin, not at his own expense, to try and get the minister's consent. The fellow had a talent for intrigue; he was always ingratiating himself with the priests, making a great show of his eagerness to be of service to them. He had learnt a kind of religious jargon in their school, which he was for ever making use of, for he prided himself on being a fine preacher. He knew just one passage from the Latin Bible, and that was as good as a thousand, for he repeated it a thousand times a day. He was seldom short of money either, if he knew there was any in another man's purse. But he was sharp rather than a rogue, and when he uttered his pious patter in the tone of voice of a recruiting-officer he reminded me of Peter the Hermit preaching the Crusade with his sword at his hip.

As for Mme Sabran, his wife, she was a decent enough woman, rather quieter by day than by night. As I always shared their room, her noisy spells of sleeplessness frequently woke me up, and they would have woken me up even more often if I had known the reason for them. But I had not the least idea, and was quite obtuse on that score until Nature herself undertook the task of instructing me.

I walked gaily on my way with my pious guide and his lively companion. No misadventure disturbed my journey. I was as happy physically and mentally as at any time in my life. I was young, vigorous, healthy, fearless, and full of confidence in myself and others. I was enjoying that short but precious moment in life when its overflowing fullness expands, so to speak, one's whole being, and lends all nature, in one's eyes, the charm of one's own existence. I was less uneasy now, for I had an object to hold my wandering thoughts and fix my imagination. I looked on myself as the creature, the pupil, the friend and almost the lover of Mme de Warens. The nice things she had said to me, the slight caresses she had bestowed on me, the tender interest she had seemed to take in me, and her friendly glances, which seemed loving glances to me because they inspired me with love – all this was food for my thoughts as I walked on, and gave me delicious imaginings. Not a fear or a doubt for my future troubled my dreams. By sending me to Turin they had, as I saw it, assumed responsibility for my existence there; they would find me a suitable situation. I need have no further care for myself; others had undertaken to look after me. So I walked with a light step, freed of that burden; and my heart was full of young desires, alluring hopes, and brilliant prospects. Every object I saw seemed a guarantee of my future happiness. I saw in my imagination a country feast in every house and wild games in every meadow;

bathing in every river and fishing from every bank; delicious fruit on every tree and voluptuous assignations in its shade; bowls of milk and cream on the mountain-sides, everywhere the delights of idleness, and peace and simplicity, and the joy of going one knew not where. In fact nothing struck my eyes without bringing some thrill of pleasure to my heart. The grandeur, the variety, and real beauty of the landscape amply justified my pleasure, and vanity as well had a hand in it. To be travelling to Italy so young, to have seen so many countries already, to be following in Hannibal's footsteps across the mountains, seemed to me a glory beyond my years. Moreover there were good and frequent inns, and I had a fine appetite and enough to eat. For, indeed, I had no reason to stint myself; my dinner was nothing compared to M. Sabran's.

I do not remember ever having had in all my life a spell of time so completely free from care and anxiety as those seven or eight days we spent on the road. For since we had to suit our pace to Mme Sabran's, it was one long stroll. This memory has left me the strongest taste for everything associated with it, for mountains especially and for travelling on foot. I have never travelled so except in my prime, and it has always been a delight to me. Business and duties and luggage to carry soon compelled me to play the gentleman and hire carriages; then carking cares, troubles, and anxiety climbed in with me; and from that moment, instead of feeling on my travels only the pleasures of the road, I was conscious of nothing but the need to arrive at my destination. For a long while I searched Paris for any two men sharing my tastes, each willing to contribute fifty *louis* from his purse and a year of his time for a joint tour of Italy on foot, with no other attendant than a lad to come with us and carry a knapsack. Many people appeared, seemingly delighted with the idea. But really they all took it for a pipe dream, for a plan one enjoys talking about but has no wish to carry out. I remember talking with such passion of the project to Diderot and Grimm that finally I infected them with my enthusiasm. I thought I had it all settled: but soon it reduced itself to a mere journey on paper, in which Grimm had the amusing idea of getting Diderot to commit various impieties and of handing me over to the Inquisition in his stead.

My regret at reaching Turin so quickly was tempered by the pleasure of seeing a large town and the hope of soon cutting a figure worthy of myself. For the fumes of ambition were now filling my head, and already I regarded myself as immeasurably superior to my

old position of apprentice. I was far from foreseeing that in a very short time I should fall considerably below it.

Before I go further I must present my reader with an apology, or rather a justification, for the petty details I have just been entering into, and for those I shall enter into later, none of which may appear interesting in his eyes. Since I have undertaken to reveal myself absolutely to the public, nothing about me must remain hidden or obscure. I must remain incessantly beneath his gaze, so that he may follow me in all the extravagances of my heart and into every least corner of my life. Indeed, he must never lose sight of me for a single instant, for if he finds the slightest gap in my story, the smallest hiatus, he may wonder what I was doing at that moment and accuse me of refusing to tell the whole truth. I am laying myself sufficiently open to human malice by telling my story, without rendering myself more vulnerable by any silence.

My little hoard of money was gone. I had chattered, and my companions had been quick to profit by my silliness. Mme Sabran found means to strip me of everything down to a little piece of silver ribbon which Mme de Warens had given me for my small sword. This I regretted more than all the rest. They would even have kept my word if I had been less obstinate. They had faithfully paid my expenses on the road; but they had left me nothing. I arrived at Turin without clothes or money or linen, and was left with no means but my merit for acquiring the honour and fortune I intended to win.

I presented my letters of introduction and was immediately taken to the hospice for converts, there to be instructed in the faith which was the price of my subsistence. As I entered I saw a great iron-barred door, which was shut and double locked behind me, once I was in. This seemed a formidable beginning but hardly an agreeable one, and I had already food for thought when they showed me into a room of considerable size. The only furniture I could see in it was a wooden altar with a great crucifix upon it, at the far end, and four or five chairs round the walls, which were wooden also and appeared to have been waxed, though, in fact, they owed their gloss only to use and rubbing. In this assembly-hall were four or five frightful cut-throats, my fellow pupils, who looked more like the devil's bodyguard than men who aspired to become children of God. Two of these scoundrels were Croats who called themselves Jews or Moors, and who spent their lives, as they confessed to me, roaming Spain and Italy, embracing Christianity and having themselves baptized wherever the rewards

were sufficiently tempting. Another iron door was then thrown open, half way along a large balcony overlooking the courtyard, and through it entered our sister-converts, who were to earn regeneration like me, not by baptism but by a solemn abjuration. They were the greatest set of sluttish, abandoned whores that ever contaminated the Lord's sheepfold. Only one of them struck me as pretty and rather attractive. She was about my own age, perhaps a year or two older, and she had a roving eye that occasionally caught mine. This inspired me with some desire to make her acquaintance. But for the better part of two months which she spent in the place – she had already been there three – it was absolutely impossible for me to approach her, so rigorously was she guarded by our old jaileress, and so closely watched by the holy missionary who worked with more zeal than diligence at her conversion. She must have been extremely stupid, though she did not look it, for no instruction was ever so long. The holy man never found her quite ready to make her abjuration. But in the end she wearied of confinement and said she wanted to leave – converted or not; and they had to take her at her word while she was still willing, for fear she might mutiny and refuse to abjure.

The small community was assembled in honour of the new-comer. Then there was a short exhortation, encouraging me to take advantage of the grace God offered me, and inviting the others to pray for me and edify me by their examples. After that our virgins were returned to their cloister, and I was at leisure to wonder at the strange place I found myself in.

Next morning we were assembled again, for instruction; and it was then that I began to reflect for the first time on the step I was about to take and the circumstances that had brought me to it.

I must repeat one thing which I have said before, and shall perhaps say again, a thing of which I grow more convinced every day. And that is that if ever a child received a sound and reasonable education that child was I. Born into a family superior in its manners to the common people, I had learnt only wisdom from my relations, who had shown me honourable examples, one and all. Although my father was a pleasure-loving man he was scrupulously upright, and most religious. In the world he cut a dashing figure, but at home he was a good Christian and instilled in me at an early age his own fundamental morality. All my three aunts were good and virtuous women. The two elder were both religious, but the youngest, who combined charm, wit, and good sense, was perhaps even more so, though in a

less ostentatious way. From the bosom of that worthy family I passed to M. Lambercier, who was not only a minister and a preacher but a believer in his heart, whose actions fell little short of his words. By their mild and judicious instruction, he and his sisters nurtured those principles of piety which they found in my heart; and so honest, restrained, and reasonable were their methods of doing so that, instead of being bored by a sermon, I never left church without being deeply moved, and without resolving to live a good life – resolutions which I rarely failed to keep when I remembered them. At my Aunt Bernard's I was rather more bored by religion, for she made a business of it. At my master's I hardly thought of it at all, though my ideas on the subject remained unchanged. I met no young people to pervert my morals. I became a rogue but not a libertine.

I had therefore as much religion as was natural in a boy of my years, or rather more. For why should I make pretences here? Mine was no true childhood; I always felt and thought like a man. Only as I grew up did I become my true age, which I had not been at my birth. You may laugh at my modestly setting myself up as a prodigy. Very well, but when you have had your laugh, find a child who is attracted by novels at six, who is interested and moved by them to the point of weeping hot tears. Then I shall admit to being absurdly vain, and agree that I am wrong.

So, when I said that one should not talk to children about religion if one hopes that one day they will have some, and that they are incapable of knowing God, even in our imperfect way, I was basing my conviction on my observations, but not on my own experience. For I knew that my experience did not apply to others. Find me a Jean-Jacques Rousseau of six, talk to him of God at seven, and I promise you that you will be taking no risks.

It is clear, I think, that for a child, and even for a man, to have a religion means to follow the one in which he is born. Sometimes one dispenses with part of it, one rarely adds anything to it; dogmatic faith is the fruit of education. Besides the common principle that bound me to the religion of my fathers, I had that aversion to Catholicism which is peculiar to our city. It was represented to us as the blackest idolatry, and its clergy were depicted in the most sordid colours. This point of view was so strong in my case that in my childhood I had never peeped inside a Catholic church, never met a priest in his vestments and never heard a processional bell, without a shiver of terror and alarm. I soon ceased to have these fears when in a town, but in country districts, which

remind me most forcibly of the places where I knew them first, I have often found that terror to return. These impressions contrasted strangely, it is true, with memories of the kindness with which priests all around Geneva spontaneously treated the children of the city. Whereas the viaticum bell struck me with fear, the bells for mass and vespers reminded me of a breakfast with good fare, fresh butter, fruit, and milk. M. de Pontverre's generous dinner had also produced a good effect. So I had allowed myself quite easily to be fooled. Envisaging popery only in relation to feasting and good cheer, I had easily accustomed myself to the idea of being a Catholic. But the thought of solemnly entering that faith had only occurred to me fugitively and as something in the distant future. But at this moment there was no deceiving myself; I saw with the liveliest horror the sort of obligation I had incurred and its inevitable results. The future neophytes around me were not of a kind to strengthen my courage by their example, and I could not pretend to myself that the deed of piety I was about to commit was in essence anything but scoundrelly. Young though I was, I knew that, whichever were the true religion, I was going to sell my own, and that even if I were making the right choice I should in the depths of my heart be lying to the Holy Ghost, and should deserve the contempt of humankind. The more I thought the more enraged I became with myself; and I groaned at the fate that had led me there, as if that fate had not been of my own making. There were times when these thoughts became so strong that if I had found the door open for a moment I should certainly have run away. But I had not a chance, and this resolution was no firmer than the rest.

It could not prevail. There were too many secret desires working against it. What is more, there was my stubborn resolve not to go back to Geneva; the shame, and the difficulty too, of returning across the mountains; the embarrassment of being poor and friendless in a strange land; all these combined to make me feel that my scruples of conscience were but repentance too late. I affected to reproach myself for what I had done in order to excuse what I was going to do. By exaggerating my past sins, I accepted the future as their inevitable consequence. I did not say to myself: 'Nothing is done yet. You can retain your innocence if you wish.' What I did say was, 'Sigh for the crime or which you have incurred the guilt, and which you cannot help carrying out now.'

Yet what rare strength of mind I should have required, at my age, to go back on all the promises I had made, all the hopes I had encouraged,

to break the chains I had hung round my own neck and boldly declare that I wished to remain in the religion of my fathers, whatever the consequences might be. Such courage was impossible at my age; its chances of success would have been slight. Things had gone too far for them to allow me to draw back; and the greater my resistance, the more resolved they would have been to overcome it in one way or another.

The sophistry that undid me is common to the majority of men, who deplore their lack of strength when it is already too late to make use of it. Virtue is only difficult through our own fault. If we chose always to be wise we should rarely need to be virtuous. But inclinations which we could easily overcome irresistibly attract us. We give in to slight temptations and minimize the danger. We fall insensibly into dangerous situations, from which we could easily have safeguarded ourselves, but from which we cannot withdraw without heroic efforts which appal us. So finally, as we tumble into the abyss, we ask God why he has made us so feeble. But, in spite of ourselves, He replies through our consciences: 'I have made you too feeble to climb out of the pit, because I made you strong enough not to fall in.'

I did not exactly resolve to turn Catholic. But, seeing the date of my conversion so far off, I utilized the time to accustom myself to the idea and, in the meanwhile, imagined some unforeseen event that would rescue me from my difficulty. To gain time, I decided to put up the best defence I possibly could, and soon my vanity gave me an excuse for ceasing to think of my resolution. For once I found that I could sometimes confuse the men who were trying to instruct me, it was enough to make me try to floor them completely. The efforts I devoted to this end were quite ridiculous. I decided to work on them whilst they were working on me, believing in my simplicity that I had only to convince them and they would agree to turn Protestant.

They certainly did not find me as easy as they expected, either in the matter of receptivity or inclination. Protestants are generally better instructed than Catholics, and necessarily so, for their doctrine requires discussion, where the Roman faith demands submission. A Catholic must accept a decision imposed on him; a Protestant must learn to decide for himself. They were aware of this, but they did not expect from my age and circumstances that I should present any great difficulty to men of experience. Besides I had not even made my first Communion, or received the instruction preparatory to it. This they knew too, but they did not know, on the other hand, that I had been well taught at M. Lambercier's and that I had also in my possession a

small storehouse – most inconvenient to such gentry – in the shape of the *History of Church and Empire*, which I had learnt almost by heart at my father's, and since nearly forgotten, but which came back to me as the dispute warmed up.

A little old priest with some dignity gave us the first lesson, all together. For my companions it was more of a catechism than a controversy, and the problem was to teach them, not to overcome their objections. But it was quite different with me. When my turn came I held him up at all points. I put every difficulty I could in his way. This made the lesson a very long one, and considerably bored the audience. My old priest talked a great deal, grew hot, wandered from the point, and got out of his difficulty by saying that he did not understand French at all well. Next day they put me alone in a separate room, for fear my awkward arguments might upset my comrades. Here I had a different priest, a younger man who was a fine talker – that is to say he used long sentences. If ever a teacher was self-satisfied that man was. I did not let myself be too intimidated, however, by his imposing manner. But, feeling that, after all, I could hold my ground, I began to answer him with considerable assurance and to catch him out here and there, where I could. He thought he could floor me with Saint Augustine, Saint Gregory, and the other Fathers, but found to his utter surprise that I could handle all the Fathers as nimbly as he. It was not that I had ever read them. Nor perhaps had he. But I remembered a number of passages out of my Le Sueur, and when he made a quotation I did not pause to dispute it but replied immediately with another from the same Father, which often considerably upset him. But in the end he won the day, for two reasons: in the first place because he was the stronger and, knowing that I was more or less at his mercy, I had sufficient judgement, young though I was, not to push him too far. For I could see well enough that the little old priest had not taken me or my erudition too kindly. But the second reason was that the young priest had studied and I had not. As a result he employed methods of argument that I could not follow, and every time he saw himself confronted with an unforeseen objection, he put off the discussion to the next day on the plea that I was straying from the point. Sometimes, even, he disputed all my quotations, denying their authenticity. Then he would offer to get me the book and challenge me to find them. He knew that the risk he was taking was slight, for with all my borrowed learning, I was not used enough to handling books and knew too little Latin to find a passage in a huge volume, even had I been sure that it

was there. I rather suspect him of having resorted to that trickery of which he accused Protestant ministers, and of sometimes inventing passages to avoid answering an awkward question.

During the course of these petty controversies, and whilst day after day was being wasted in arguments and idling and muttering of prayers, I had a very unpleasant little experience, which very nearly had unfortunate results for me.

There is no soul so vile, no heart so barbarous as to be insusceptible to some sort of affection, and one of the two cut-throats who called themselves Moors took a fancy to me. He was fond of coming up to me and gossiping with me in his queer jargon. He did me little services, sometimes giving me some of his food at table, and he frequently kissed me with an ardour which I found most displeasing. But, frightened though I naturally was by his dusky face, which was beautified by a long scar, and by his passionate glances, which seemed to me more savage than affectionate, I put up with his kisses, saying to myself, 'The poor man has conceived a warm friendship for me; it would be wrong to repulse him.' But he passed by degrees to more unseemly conduct, and sometimes made me such strange suggestions that I thought he was wrong in the head. One night he wanted to share my bed, but I objected on the plea that it was too narrow. He then pressed me to come into his. I still refused, however, for the poor devil was so dirty and smelt so strongly of the tobacco he chewed that he made me feel ill.

Next day, very early in the morning, we were alone together in the assembly-hall. He resumed his caresses, but with such violence that I was frightened. Finally he tried to work up to the most revolting liberties and, by guiding my hand, to make me take the same liberties with him. I broke wildly away with a cry and leaped backwards, but without displaying indignation or anger, for I had not the slightest idea what it was all about. But I showed my surprise and disgust to such effect that he then left me alone. But as he gave up the struggle I saw something whitish and sticky shoot towards the fireplace and fall on the ground. My stomach turned over, and I rushed on to the balcony, more upset, more troubled and more frightened as well, than ever I had been in my life. I was almost sick.

I could not understand what was the matter with the poor man. I thought he was having a fit of epilepsy or some other seizure even more terrible. And really I know of no more hideous sight for a man in cold blood than such foul and obscene behaviour, nothing more

revolting than a terrifying face on fire with the most brutal lust. I have never seen another man in that state; but if we appear like that to women, they must indeed be fascinated not to find us repulsive.

I could think of nothing better than to go and inform everybody of what had just happened. Our old woman attendant told me to hold my tongue. But I saw that my story had much upset her, for I heard her mutter under her breath: *Can maledet! brutta bestia!** As I could see no reason for holding my tongue, I took no notice of her but went on talking. I talked so much in fact that next day one of the principals came very early and read me a sharp lecture, accusing me of impugning the honour of a sacred establishment and making a lot of fuss about nothing.

In addition to this rebuke he explained to me a number of things I did not know, but which he did not suspect he was telling me for the first time. For he believed that I had known what the man wanted when I defended myself, but had merely been unwilling. He told me gravely that it was a forbidden and immoral act like fornication, but that the desire for it was not an affront to the person who was its object. There was nothing to get so annoyed about in having been found attractive. He told me quite openly that in his youth he had been similarly honoured and, having been surprised in a situation where he could put up no resistance, he had found nothing so brutal about it all. He carried his effrontery so far as to employ frank terminology and, imagining that the reason for my refusal had been fear of pain, assured me that my apprehensions were groundless. There was no reason to be alarmed about nothing.

I listened to the wretch with redoubled astonishment, since he was not speaking for himself but apparently to instruct me for my own good. The whole matter seemed so simple to him that he had not even sought privacy for our conversation. There was an ecclesiastic listening all the while who found the matter no more alarming than he. This natural behaviour so impressed me that I finally believed such things were no doubt general practice in the world, though I had so far not had occasion to learn of them. So I listened without anger though not without disgust. The memory of my experience, and especially of what I had seen, remained so firmly imprinted on my mind that my stomach still rose when I thought of it. Unconsciously my dislike for the business extended to the apologist, and I could not sufficiently control myself for him not to see the ill effect of his lesson. He shot me a far from affectionate glance, and from that time on spared no pain

* Cursed dog! foul beast!

to make my stay at the hospice unpleasant. So well did he succeed that, seeing only one way of escape, I made the same impassioned efforts to take it as hitherto I had taken to avoid it.

This adventure put me on my guard for the future against the attentions of pederasts. And the sight of men with that reputation, by reminding me of the looks and behaviour of my frightful Moor, has always so horrified me that I have found it difficult to hide my disgust. Women, on the other hand, acquired a greater value for me, by way of contrast. I seemed to owe them a reparation for the offences of my sex, that could only be paid by the most delicate affection and personal homage. My memories of that self-styled African transformed the plainest of sluts into an object of adoration.

I do not know what can have been said to him. As far as I could see no one except Mistress Lorenza looked on him any less favourably than before. However, he never approached or spoke to me again. A week later he was baptized with great ceremony, swathed in white from head to foot to symbolize the purity of his regenerate soul. On the day after, he left the hospice and I never saw him again.

My turn came a month later.* For my directors required all that time to win the honour of a difficult conversion. They made me pass every dogma in review in order to triumph at my new docility.

Finally I was sufficiently instructed and sufficiently disposed to the will of my masters to be led in procession to the metropolitan Church of Saint John to make a solemn abjuration and receive a supplementary baptism, though I was not actually re-baptized. But as the ceremonies are practically the same, that is enough to delude people into the belief that Protestants are not Christians. I was dressed in a special grey robe trimmed with white, kept for occasions of this sort. A man in front and a man behind carried copper basins on which they beat with a key, and into which everyone put an alms according to the degree of his piety or of the good will he felt to the new convert. In fact no detail of Catholic pomp was omitted that might make the ceremony more solemn for the public and more humiliating for me. The only thing missing was the white robe, which would have been useful to me afterwards. But, unlike the Moor, I was not given one since I had not the honour to be a Jew.

That was not all. I had next to go before the Inquisition to receive

[*None of the temporal facts about Rousseau's sojourn at the hospice are reliable. He would seem to have made his abjuration earlier than he says, and to have stayed there for some time afterwards.]

absolution for the crime of heresy and to re-enter the bosom of the Church with the same ceremony to which Henry IV was submitted in the person of his ambassador. The aspect and behaviour of the Right Reverend Father Inquisitor were not calculated to dispel the secret terror that had seized me when I entered that house. After several questions about my faith, my condition, and my family, he asked me abruptly whether my mother was damned. Fear made me repress a first burst of indignation, and I contented myself with replying that I sincerely hoped she was not, and that God might have enlightened her in her last moments. The monk did not reply, but made a grimace that did not look at all like a sign of approbation.

When all this was over and I expected finally to be given the post that I had been hoping for, I was turned out of the door with a little more than twenty francs in small change, the proceeds of the collection. They exhorted me to live like a good Christian and to remain in grace. Then they wished me good luck, shut the door behind me and all disappeared.

Thus all my grand hopes were eclipsed in one moment, and all that had accrued from the self-interested step I had just taken was the memory of having become simultaneously an apostate and a dupe. It is easy to imagine the sharp change in my ideas when, after dreaming of the most brilliant fortune, I found myself plunged into abject misery; when after considering in the morning what mansion I should choose for my habitation, I was reduced at evening to sleeping in the street. You may suppose that I began by falling into a despair embittered by regret and annoyance at my own mistakes, and by the consciousness that all my misfortunes were of my own making. Not at all. I had just been shut up for the first time in my life and for more than two months. The first feeling I had was one of joy at recovering my liberty. After long servitude, I was master of myself and my actions once more. I saw myself in the middle of a great city of abundant opportunities, filled with people of rank, who could not fail to welcome me for my talent and deserts, as soon as I became known. Besides I had plenty of time to spare, and the twenty francs in my pocket seemed to me an inexhaustible treasure which I could spend as I liked without accounting to anyone. It was the first time I had felt so rich. So, far from indulging in tears and despair, I merely altered my hopes, and my pride lost nothing by the change. Never had I felt such confidence and security. I believed that my fortune was already made, and I congratulated myself on owing it to my own unaided efforts.

The first thing I did was to satisfy my curiosity, or perhaps to celebrate my liberty, by making a complete tour of the town. I went to see the posting of the guard, and was highly delighted by their military band. I followed processions, fascinated by the mumbling of the priests. I went to see the royal palace, and approached it with awe. But, seeing other people go in, I followed them and no one prevented me. Perhaps I owed my immunity to the little parcel under my arm. However that may be, I conceived a great opinion of myself when I found myself in the palace. I felt almost as if I lived there. In the end, after so much trotting about, I grew tired. I was hungry and it was hot. So I went into a dairy, and was given some *giuncà* (cream cheese) and two sticks of that excellent Piedmontese bread that I prefer to any other. For my five or six *sous* I got one of the best meals I have ever had in my life.

Now I had to look for a lodging. I knew sufficient Italian by then to make myself understood, and it was not difficult to find one. I was sufficiently prudent to choose it rather according to my purse than to my taste, and was directed to a soldier's wife in the Via di Po who let out beds at a *sou* a night to servants out of situations. I found an empty bunk, and settled in. She was young and recently married, although she had already had five or six children. We all slept in the same room, mother, children, and lodgers; and things went on like that all the time I was there. On the whole she was a good woman. She swore like a trooper, and was always dishevelled and slovenly. But she was kind-hearted and obliging, took a friendly interest in me, and even did me a service.

I devoted several days solely to the pleasures of independence and curiosity. I went on rambling inside and outside the city, exploring and inspecting everything that seemed to me novel and strange; and everything seemed so to a young man just escaped from confinement, who had never seen a capital city. I was especially punctilious in my attendance at Court, and was regularly present every morning at the royal mass. I thought it fine to be in the same church with the prince and his suite. But my passion for music, which was just beginning to show itself, had more to do with this regularity of attendance than had the royal pomp, which is unvarying and, once familiar, soon loses its charm. The King of Sardinia had then the best music in Europe. Somis, Desjardins, and the Bezuzzis, one after another, shone at his Court, and that was more than enough to attract a young man who was delighted by the sound of any instrument well played. For the rest, I

had nothing but a stupid and uncovetous admiration for the magnificence which struck my eyes. The only thing that interested me amidst all the glory of the Court was to watch for some young princess deserving of my homage, with whom I could enact a romance. I almost started one in a less brilliant quarter, where if I had persevered I should have found infinitely greater delights.

Although I lived most economically my purse insensibly exhausted itself. My economy, incidentally, owed less to my prudence than to the simplicity of my tastes which, even to-day, frequenting the tables of the great has not affected. I did not know then, and I do not know now, any better fare than at a country meal. If I am given milk, eggs, salad, cheese, brown bread, and table wine I am sufficiently entertained. My appetite will do the rest, so long as I am not robbed of it by the unfortunate attentions of a butler and waiters all around me. I enjoyed much better meals at that time, when I had six or seven *sous* to spend, than I do now when I have six or seven francs. I was abstemious then, through lack of temptation to be otherwise. But I am wrong to call it abstemiousness. For I derived every possible pleasure from my eating. My pears, my *giuncà*, my cheese, my sticks of bread, and my several glasses of a rough Montferrat wine that you could cut with a knife, made me the happiest of gourmands. But, even with economy, one could see the end of twenty francs. I saw it coming more clearly every day and, for all the heedlessness of my youth, my concern for the future soon grew to alarm. Of all my castles in Spain only one was left, that of finding a job by which I could live. But that was not easy to come by. I thought of my old trade. But I was not sufficiently skilled to go and work for a master, and master watchmakers, also, did not abound in Turin. So, while waiting for something better, I decided to go from shop to shop, and offer to engrave figures on coats of arms or plate, hoping to tempt people by a low price and leaving them to fix the figure. This plan was not very successful. Almost everywhere I was shown the door, and such work as I was given was so small that I scarcely earned a few meals by it. One day, however, as I was going in the early morning down the Contrà Nova, I saw through a shop window a young saleswoman so charming and attractive that, despite my shyness with ladies, I had no hesitation in going in and proffering her my small talents. She did not rebuff me, but made me sit down and tell her my story. She was sympathetic, and encouraged me by saying that good Christians would never let me starve. Then, after sending to a neighbouring goldsmith for the tools I said I needed, she went

upstairs to her kitchen and herself brought me down some breakfast. Such beginnings seemed to me to augur well, and the sequel did not disappoint me. She seemed pleased with my small work and, once I had gained confidence, still more pleased with my chatter. For I had been silent at first, since despite her graciousness I had been overawed by her brilliance and fine clothes. But soon her hearty welcome, the sympathy in her voice and her soft and kindly ways put me at my ease. I saw that I was having a success, and that made my success the greater. But though she was an Italian and too pretty not to be something of a flirt, she was nevertheless so modest and I was so bashful that it was not easy for things to develop quickly. Indeed we were not left time to carry the affair far. I remember, therefore, with a charm enhanced by their brevity, the few hours which I spent with her, and I can declare that I there enjoyed some little foretaste of the sweetest and purest pleasures of love.

She was an extremely attractive brunette, with a vivacity that was the more appealing for the natural kindness that shone in her pretty face. Her name was Mme Basile. Her husband was older than herself and somewhat jealous, and left her, when he was travelling, under the care of a clerk who was too disagreeable to be seductive. But he did not fail to have pretensions of his own, though the only evidence he gave of them was his bad temper. He took a strong dislike to me, though I enjoyed hearing him play the flute, which he did very well. This new Aegisthus always grumbled when he saw me visit his mistress. He treated me with scorn, and she repaid him on my behalf in kind. She even seemed to delight in tormenting him and in caressing me in his presence. But this sort of vengeance, much though I liked it, would have been even more pleasant if we had been alone. She did not push things as far as that, however, or, at least, not exactly in that way. Perhaps she thought me too young, perhaps she did not know how to make the advances herself, perhaps she really wanted to keep her virtue. In any case she had a sort of reserve, which was not forbidding yet which made me nervous without my knowing why. Although I did not feel that true and fond respect for her that I felt for Mme de Warens, I was more timid and considerably less familiar with her. I trembled with embarrassment, I dared not look at her or breathe in her presence, yet I feared leaving her more than I feared death. I feasted my eyes greedily on everything I could see without being observed – on the flowers of her dress, the tip of her pretty toes, the glimpse of her firm white arm between her glove and her sleeve, and her bosom, which

was sometimes visible between her kerchief and her bodice. Every detail added to the general impression. When I looked at all I could see, and somewhat beyond, my eyes swam, my chest grew tight, and my breathing became more difficult every moment. All that I could do was to heave a succession of noiseless sighs, which were most embarrassing in the silence in which we so often sat. Fortunately Mme Basile was too busy with her work to notice them, or so I thought. Yet I quite often saw the lace on her bosom rise in a sort of sympathy. This dangerous sight would complete my undoing. But when I was on the point of indulging my emotion she would say something to me in a calm voice, which immediately called me to my senses.

I was alone with her several times in this way, without any word or gesture or too eloquent glance indicating the least understanding between us. This state of things, most tormenting though I found it, gave me pleasure nevertheless, though in the simplicity of my heart I could scarcely imagine why I was so tormented. Apparently these little privacies did not displease her either. At least she provided frequent opportunities for them – a most disinterested action on her part indeed, considering how little advantage she allowed me to take of them, or took of them herself.

One day she went up to her room, bored with the stupid conversation of the clerk, leaving me in the back of the shop, where I did my work. When my small job was finished I followed her and, finding her door ajar, slipped in unperceived. She was beside the window at her embroidery, and facing that part of the room opposite the door. She could not see me come in nor, on account of the noise of carts in the street, could she hear me. She always dressed well, but that day her attire was almost coquettish. She was in a charming attitude, with her head slightly lowered to reveal the whiteness of her neck, and she had flowers in her beautifully brushed hair. Her whole form displayed a charm which I had ample time to dwell on and which deprived me of my senses. I threw myself on my knees just inside the door and held out my arms to her in an access of passion, quite certain that she could not hear me, and imagining that she could not see me. But over the chimney-piece was a mirror, which betrayed me. I do not know what effect this scene had upon her. She did not look at me or speak to me. But, half turning her head, she pointed with a simple movement of her finger to the mat at her feet. I trembled, cried out, and threw myself down where she had pointed, all in a single second. But what seems almost incredible is that I had not the courage to attempt anything

more, or to say a single word. I dared not raise my eyes, nor even, despite my uncomfortable position, so much as touch her on the knee, to give myself a moment's support. I was motionless and dumb, but certainly not calm. Everything about me betrayed agitation, joy, gratitude, and ardent desire, uncertain of its object and restrained by a fear of displeasing, which my young heart could not dispel.

She seemed to me no calmer and no less timid than myself. Disturbed by my state, disconcerted at having provoked it, and beginning to realize the consequences of a gesture no doubt made without reflection, she neither drew me to her nor repulsed me. Indeed, she did not take her eyes from her work, and tried to behave as if she could not see me at her feet. But despite my stupidity I could not fail to realize that she shared my embarrassment and perhaps my desires, and was restrained by a bashfulness equal to my own. This, however, did not give me the strength to conquer my fears. Since she was five or six years older than myself, I thought that all the initiative ought to come from her and, as she did nothing to stimulate mine, I told myself that she had no wish for me to show any. Even to-day I think that I was right. For surely she had too much sense not to see that such a novice as I not only required encouragement but actual instruction.

I do not know how this lively dumb-show would have ended, nor how long I should have remained in that ridiculous but pleasurable position, if we had not been interrupted. When my emotions were at their height I heard the door of the kitchen open. It was next to the room we were in. Mme Basile's alarm showed in her voice and her gestures. 'Get up,' she said, 'here is Rosina!' As I sprang to my feet I seized the hand she held out to me and imprinted two burning kisses upon it, at the second of which I felt that charming hand pressed slightly against my lips. Never in my life have I known so tender a moment. But the opportunity I had lost did not occur again, and our young love went no further.

That is perhaps the reason why the image of that delightful woman has remained printed in such charming outline on my secret heart. It has gained added beauty, indeed, as I have become acquainted with the world and womankind. If she had had a little experience she would have taken different measures to encourage a young lover. But though her heart was frail it was modest. She yielded involuntarily to an overpowering inclination. But this was, by all appearances, her first infidelity, and I should perhaps have had more difficulty in overcoming her bashfulness than my own. Without having gone so far, however,

in her company I tasted ineffable delights. None of the feelings I have had from the possession of women have been equal to those two minutes spent at her feet without even the courage to touch her dress. No, there are no pleasures like those one gets from a modest woman whom one loves. Everything is a favour with her. A beckoning finger and a hand lightly pressed against my lips – these are all the favours I ever received from Mme Basile, and the memory of them, slight though they were, still moves me when I think of them.

For the next two days, however closely I looked out for the chance of another such meeting, I could find no opportunity. Nor could I detect on her part any effort to contrive one. Her manner indeed was reserved, though no colder than usual, and I think she avoided my glances through fear of not being able to control her own. Her confounded clerk was more tiresome than ever. He even started teasing and chaffing me, saying that I should be a success with the ladies. I trembled with fear that I had done something indiscreet and, considering now that there was an understanding between Mme Basile and myself, tried to conceal an infatuation which hitherto had stood in no great need of disguise. This made me more cautious in choosing opportunities for indulging it, and so anxious was I for them to be safe that I found none at all.

This is another little romantic folly of which I have never been able to cure myself, and which has combined with my natural timidity largely to belie that clerk's predictions. I have loved with too much sincerity – too perfectly, I might even say – to attain easy success. No passions were ever at once so pure and so strong as mine. Never was love more tender, genuine, and disinterested. On countless occasions I would have sacrificed my happiness to that of the woman I loved. Her reputation has been dearer to me than my life, and never for all the joys of gratification have I been willing to risk her peace of mind for a simple moment. Therefore I have brought so much care, so much secrecy, and so many precautions to my affairs that not one of them has ever been successful. My lack of success with women has always come from loving them too much.

To return to the flute-playing Aegisthus, the strange thing was that as that traitor became more unbearable, he seemed also to become more obliging. From the first day his mistress had taken a liking for me, she had tried to make me useful about the shop. I was tolerably good at arithmetic, and she suggested he should teach me to keep the books. But the disagreeable fellow took the idea very badly, fearing

perhaps that I should push him out of his job. So when my engraving was finished, all the work I got was copying some accounts and memoranda, balancing certain ledgers, and translating a few business letters from Italian into French. But suddenly the fellow decided to return to the proposal which had been made and rejected, and said he would teach me double-entry book-keeping, so that I should be ready to offer my services to M. Basile on his return. There was something false, malicious, or ironical in his manner, however, that I could not specify but which gave me no confidence. Mme Basile did not wait for me to reply. She told him dryly that I was obliged for his suggestion, but that she hoped fortune would finally recognize my talents, and that it would be a great pity if with my intelligence I were to be no more than a clerk.

She had several times told me that she wanted me to meet someone who might be useful to me. She was wise enough to feel that it was time to wean me from her. Our dumb avowals had been made on a Thursday. On the Sunday following she gave a dinner to which I was invited, and also a pleasant-looking Jacobin monk to whom she introduced me. This monk was very kind to me. He congratulated me on my conversion and made several references to my affairs, which showed me that she had told him the details of my life. Then, patting me twice on the cheek with the back of his hand, he told me to be good and brave and to come and see him, when we could talk at greater leisure. From the respect which everyone had for him I guessed that he was a person of importance; and from the paternal tone he used towards Mme Basile I assumed that he was her confessor. But I also clearly remember that with his restrained familiarity were blended marks of esteem, or even of admiration, for his penitent, which impressed me less then than they do to-day. Had I been more intelligent, how flattered I should have been that I had been able to stir the feelings of a young woman so highly thought of by her confessor!

The table was not big enough for our numbers. A little one was needed in addition, at which I had the pleasure of sitting with the clerk. I lost nothing of the entertainment or good food. A great number of dishes were sent to the little table, and certainly not for his benefit. Everything had gone very well so far. The women were very gay, the men most attentive, and Mme Basile did the honours most charmingly and gracefully. In the middle of dinner we heard a carriage stop outside the door. Someone came upstairs. It was M. Basile. I can see him now as if he had this moment come in, in his scarlet coat with gilt

buttons, a colour that I have loathed from that day. M. Basile was a fine, tall man, of good appearance. He entered noisily with the air of someone surprising the company, though there was no one there but his friends. His wife threw her arms round his neck, seized his hands, and smothered him with caresses which he did not return. He greeted everyone, a plate was laid for him, and he started to eat. But no sooner had they begun to discuss his journey than he glanced at the little table and asked in a severe tone who the little boy was whom he saw there. Mme Basile told him quite ingenuously. He then enquired whether I lived in the house, and was told I did not. 'Why not?' he asked coarsely. 'Since he is here in the daytime, he might as well stay here at night.' The monk cut him short and after a few grave and truthful words in praise of Mme Basile, said something on my behalf, adding that far from blaming his wife for her godly charity, he should be eager to take a share in it, since there was nothing in it that trespassed beyond the bounds of discretion. The husband replied in tones of some annoyance which he half concealed, out of respect for the monk's presence. But what he said was enough to warn me that he had been informed about me, and that I had the clerk to thank for that trick.

As soon as we had left table he came in triumph to tell me, on his employer's behalf, that I must leave the house at once, and never set foot there again so long as I lived. He peppered his message with everything that could render it cruel and insulting. I departed without a word, but with pain in my heart, less at the thought of seeing my last of that delightful woman than of leaving her a prey to her husband's brutality. He was right no doubt in wishing to prevent her infidelity. But, modest and well-bred though she was, she was an Italian, that is to say both sensitive and vindictive, and he was wrong, in my opinion, to treat her in a manner so calculated to bring upon him the misfortune he feared.

Such was the outcome of my first adventure. I did not fail to pass up and down the street two or three times, in order at least to catch another sight of the woman I unceasingly regretted in my heart. I did not see her, however, but her husband and his vigilant clerk who, when he caught sight of me, made a movement towards me with the yard measure that was more expressive than attractive. Finding myself so well watched, I lost heart and passed the shop no more. But at least I decided to go and see the patron she had found for me. Unfortunately I did not know his name. Several times I prowled in vain round the monastery, in hopes of meeting him. Finally, however, other events

dimmed my charming memories of Mme Basile, and in a short while I forgot her so completely that I was as simple and as much of a novice as before. I did not even feel attracted by pretty women.

Through Mme Basile's generosity, my small wardrobe was somewhat replenished. But like a prudent woman, she had been more concerned for my neatness than for my adornment. She wished to save me hardship but not to make me shine. The coat that I had brought from Geneva was still good and wearable. She only contributed a hat and some linen. I had no cuffs. For, much though I had wanted them, she had not cared to give me any. She had been content to put me in a condition to keep myself neat and tidy, which I had needed no urging to do so long as I was in her company.

A few days after the catastrophe my landlady, who, as I have said, had befriended me, told me that she had perhaps found me a place, and that a lady of position wanted to see me. These words made me think I really was on the way to great adventures. For my mind always harped on that subject. But this affair did not prove as brilliant as I had expected. I went to this lady's house with the servant who had mentioned me to her. She questioned me and examined me, and I did not displease her. So I entered her service on the spot, not in the capacity of favourite, however, but as a valet. I was dressed in her servants' livery – the only difference being that they wore shoulder-knots, and I had none. But as there was next to no braid on her livery, it was almost like an ordinary dress. So that was the unexpected end to which all my great hopes had come!

The Countess de Vercellis, whose service I had entered, was a childless widow. Her husband had been Piedmontese, but I always supposed she was from Savoy, since I could not imagine any Piedmontese speaking such good French with so pure an accent. She was of middle years, and of distinguished appearance. She had a cultured mind and was fond of French literature, with which she was well acquainted. She wrote a great deal, and always in French. Her letters indeed had the character and almost the grace of Mme de Sévigné's; some of them might have been mistaken for hers. My principal occupation, which did not displease me, was to write them at her dictation. For a cancer of the breast, which gave her great pain, prevented her writing herself.

Mme de Vercellis had not only great intelligence, but a strong and lofty character. I watched her last illness, and saw her suffer and die without ever betraying a moment's weakness, without having in any way to control herself, or doing anything unwomanly. Nor did she

even suspect that there was anything *philosophical* in her behaviour. The word indeed was not yet fashionable, and she did not even know it in the sense in which it is used to-day. This strength of character sometimes verged on harshness. She always seemed to me to have as little feeling for others as for herself; and when she did a kindness to anyone in misfortune, it was in order to do something good on principle, rather than out of any true compassion. I sampled some of this insensibility during the three months I was with her. It was natural that she should take a liking to a promising young man, whom she had continually under her eyes, and that, knowing that she was dying, she should suppose he would be in need of some help and support when she was gone. But, whether because she considered me unworthy of particular attention or because the people who besieged her allowed her to think of no one but themselves, she did nothing for me.

I remember very well, however, that she showed some curiosity to know my story. She sometimes asked me questions, and was pleased when I showed her the letters I wrote to Mme de Warens or gave her an account of my feelings. But she certainly did not go the right way about winning my confidence, for she never confided in me. My heart loved to expand, provided there was another heart to listen. But dry and cold questionings, without any sign of approval or blame at my answers, gave me no confidence. When there was nothing to show whether my chatter pleased or displeased I was always in a state of fear, and tried less to reveal my thoughts than to avoid saying anything that might injure me. I have since observed that this cold method of interrogating people in order to know them is a fairly common trick with women who pride themselves on their brains. They imagine that by concealing their feelings they will be more successful in penetrating another's. But they do not realize that in that way they deprive one of the courage to exhibit them. A man who is interrogated begins for that reason alone to be on his guard; and should he suppose that one has no real interest in him but merely wants to make him talk, he lies or keeps quiet or redoubles his caution, since he would rather be taken for an idiot than be the dupe of another's curiosity. In short, it is a bad way of reading another man's heart to conceal one's own.

Mme de Vercellis never said a word to me that betrayed affection, pity, or kindness. She coldly asked me questions, and I continuously replied. Indeed my replies were so cautious that she must have found them commonplace. For, growing tired of questioning me, she finally

asked me no more, and never spoke to me except to give me orders. She judged me less by what I was than by what she had made me; and since she saw nothing in me but a servant she prevented my appearing to her in any other light.

I believe that it was then that I was first the victim of that malicious play of intrigue that has thwarted me all my life, and has given me a very natural aversion for the apparent order of things which produces it. Mme de Vercellis's heir, since she was childless, was her nephew the Count de la Roque, who paid her assiduous attentions. Moreover her chief servants, when they saw her end approaching, did not forget their own interests; and there were so many devoted attendants around her that she hardly had time to think of me. At the head of her household was a certain M. Lorenzi, a clever man, whose even cleverer wife had so wormed herself into her mistress's favour that she lived with her rather in the position of a friend than as a paid servant. She had placed a niece of hers, Mlle Pontal by name, with Mme de Vercellis as lady's maid; and this girl, a sly creature who gave herself the airs of a maid of honour, helped her aunt so to control their mistress that she only saw through their eyes, and only acted with their hands. I had not the luck to please these three persons. I obeyed them, but I did not serve them. I did not consider that in addition to serving our common mistress I must also be the servant of her servants. Besides I was the kind of person who made them uncomfortable. They saw quite clearly that I was not in my true place, and were afraid that their mistress might see it also and take some measures to put me there, which might diminish their share of her money. For people of this sort are too greedy to be just and view any legacies left to others as subtracted from their own property. They banded together, therefore, to banish me from her sight. She liked writing letters, which diverted her mind from her illness. But they put her against the habit, and got the doctor to make her give it up, on the plea that it was too tiring for her. On the pretence that I did not understand my duties, two great louts of chairmen were put in my place. In the end they were so successful that when she made her will I had not entered her room for a week. It is true that after that I went in as before. Indeed I was more attentive to her than anyone else, for the poor woman's suffering tore my heart, and the fortitude with which she bore it inspired me with the greatest respect and affection for her. Many were the genuine tears I shed in her room without her or anyone else noticing it.

Finally we lost her. I watched her die. She had lived like a woman of

talents and intelligence; she died like a philosopher. I may say that she made the Catholic religion seem beautiful to me, by the serenity of heart with which she fulfilled its instructions, without either carelessness or affectation. She was of a serious nature. Towards the end of her illness she displayed a sort of gaiety too unbroken to be assumed, which was merely a counterpoise to her melancholy condition, the gift of her reason. She only kept her bed for the last two days, and continued to converse quietly with everyone to the last. Finally when she could no longer talk and was already in her death agony, she broke wind loudly. 'Good,' she said, turning over, 'a woman who can fart is not dead.' Those were the last words she spoke.

She had left one year's wages to each of the under-servants. But not having been entered on the strength of her household I received nothing. However the Count de la Roque had thirty *livres* given to me, and left me the new suit I was wearing, which M. Lorenzi had wanted to take from me. The Count even promised to try to find me a place, and gave me permission to go and see him. I went two or three times, but could never speak to him. I was easily put off, and did not go again; which was a mistake, as will soon be seen.

But, alas, I have not said all that I have to say about my time at Mme de Vercellis's. For though my condition was apparently unchanged I did not leave her house as I had entered it. I took away with me lasting memories of a crime and the unbearable weight of a remorse which, even after forty years, still burdens my conscience. In fact the bitter memory of it, far from fading, grows more painful with the years. Who would suppose that a child's wickedness could have such cruel results? It is for these only too probable consequences that I can find no consolation. I may have ruined a nice, honest, and decent girl, who was certainly worth a great deal more than I, and doomed her to disgrace and misery.

It is almost inevitable that the breaking up of an establishment should cause some confusion in the house, and that various things should be mislaid. But so honest were the servants and so vigilant were M. and Mme Lorenzi that nothing was found missing when the inventory was taken. Only Mlle Pontal lost a little pink and silver ribbon, which was quite old. Plenty of better things were within my reach, but this ribbon alone tempted me. I stole it, and as I hardly troubled to conceal it it was soon found. They inquired how I had got hold of it. I grew confused, stammered, and finally said with a blush that it was Marion who had given it to me. Marion was a young girl

from the Maurienne whom Mme de Vercellis had taken as her cook when she had ceased to give dinners and had discharged her chef, since she had no more need of good soup than of fine stews. Marion was not only pretty. She had that fresh complexion that one never finds except in the mountains, and such a sweet and modest air that one had only to see her to love her. What is more she was a good girl, sensible and absolutely trustworthy. They were extremely surprised when I mentioned her name. But they had no less confidence in me than in her, and decided that it was important to find which of us was a thief. She was sent for, to face a considerable number of people, including the Comte de la Roque himself. When she came she was shown the ribbon. I boldly accused her. She was confused, did not utter a word, and threw me a glance that would have disarmed the devil, but my cruel heart resisted. In the end she firmly denied the theft. But she did not get indignant. She merely turned to me, and begged me to remember myself and not disgrace an innocent girl who had never done me any harm. But, with infernal impudence, I repeated my accusation, and declared to her face that she had given me the ribbon. The poor girl started to cry, but all she said to me was, 'Oh, Rousseau, I thought you were a good fellow. You make me very sad, but I should not like to be in your place.' That is all. She continued to defend herself with equal firmness and sincerity, but never allowed herself any reproaches against me. This moderation, contrasted with my decided tone, prejudiced her case. It did not seem natural to suppose such diabolical audacity on one side and such angelic sweetness on the other. They seemed unable to come to a definite decision, but they were prepossessed in my favour. In the confusion of the moment they had not time to get to the bottom of the business; and the Comte de la Roque, in dismissing us both, contented himself with saying that the guilty one's conscience would amply avenge the innocent. His prediction was not wide of the mark. Not a day passes on which it is not fulfilled.

I do not know what happened to the victim of my calumny, but she cannot possibly have found it easy to get a good situation after that. The imputation against her honour was cruel in every respect. The theft was only a trifle, but after all, it was a theft and, what is worse, had been committed in order to lead a boy astray. Theft, lying, and obstinacy – what hope was there for a girl in whom so many vices were combined? I do not even consider misery and friendlessness the worst dangers to which she was exposed. Who can tell to what extremes the depressed feeling of injured innocence might have carried

her at her age? And if my remorse at having perhaps made her unhappy is unbearable, what can be said of my grief at perhaps having made her worse than myself?

This cruel memory troubles me at times and so disturbs me that in my sleepless hours I see this poor girl coming to reproach me for my crime, as if I had committed it only yesterday. So long as I have lived in peace it has tortured me less, but in the midst of a stormy life it deprives me of that sweet consolation which the innocent feel under persecution. It brings home to me indeed what I think I have written in one of my books, that remorse sleeps while fate is kind but grows sharp in adversity. Nevertheless I have never been able to bring myself to relieve my heart by revealing this in private to a friend. Not with the most intimate friend, not even with Mme de Warens, has this been possible. The most that I could do was to confess that I had a terrible deed on my conscience, but I have never said in what it consisted. The burden, therefore, has rested till this day on my conscience without any relief; and I can affirm that the desire to some extent to rid myself of it has greatly contributed to my resolution of writing these *Confessions*.

I have been absolutely frank in the account I have just given, and no one will accuse me, I am certain, of palliating the heinousness of my offence. But I should not fulfil the aim of this book if I did not at the same time reveal my inner feelings and hesitated to put up such excuses for myself as I honestly could. Never was deliberate wickedness further from my intention than at that cruel moment. When I accused that poor girl, it is strange but true that my friendship for her was the cause. She was present in my thoughts, and I threw the blame on the first person who occurred to me. I accused her of having done what I intended to do myself. I said that she had given the ribbon to me because I meant to give it to her. When afterwards I saw her in the flesh my heart was torn. But the presence of all those people prevailed over my repentance. I was not much afraid of punishment, I was only afraid of disgrace. But that I feared more than death, more than crime, more than anything in the world. I should have rejoiced if the earth had swallowed me up and stifled me in the abyss. But my invincible sense of shame prevailed over everything. It was my shame that made me impudent, and the more wickedly I behaved the bolder my fear of confession made me. I saw nothing but the horror of being found out, of being publicly proclaimed, to my face, as a thief, a liar, and a slanderer. Utter confusion robbed me of all other feeling. If I had been allowed time to come to my senses, I should most certainly have

admitted everything. If M. de la Roque had taken me aside and said: 'Do not ruin that poor girl. If you are guilty tell me so,' I should immediately have thrown myself at his feet, I am perfectly sure. But all they did was to frighten me, when what I needed was encouragement. My age also should be taken into account. I was scarcely more than a child. Indeed I still was one. In youth real crimes are even more reprehensible than in riper years; but what is no more than weakness is much less blameworthy, and really my crime amounted to no more than weakness. So the memory tortures me less on account of the crime itself than because of its possible evil consequences. But I have derived some benefit from the terrible impression left with me by the sole offence I have committed. For it has secured me for the rest of my life against any act that might prove criminal in its results. I think also that my loathing of untruth derives to a large extent from my having told that one wicked lie. If this is a crime that can be expiated, as I venture to believe, it must have been atoned for by all the misfortunes that have crowded the end of my life, by forty years of honest and upright behaviour under difficult circumstances. Poor Marion finds so many avengers in this world that, however great my offence against her may have been, I have little fear of carrying the sin on my conscience at death. That is all I have to say on the subject. May I never have to speak of it again.

BOOK THREE

1728-1731 Leaving Mme de Vercellis's house in more or less the same state as I had entered it, I went back to my old landlady and stayed with her for five or six weeks, during which time my health and youth and idleness often had a most disturbing effect on my feelings. I was restless, absent-minded, and dreamy; I wept and sighed and longed for a pleasure which I could not imagine but of which I nevertheless felt the lack. This state is indescribable; and few men can even have any conception of it. For most of them have anticipated this overflowing of life, which is both delicious and tormenting, and which, in the intoxication of desire, gives one a foretaste of gratification. The heat in my blood incessantly filled my mind with pictures of women and girls. But not knowing the true nature of sex I imagined them acting according to my own strange fantasies, and had no idea of anything else. These thoughts, however, kept all my senses in a most troublesome state of activity, from which fortunately they did not teach me to relieve myself. I would have given my life to have found another Mlle Goton for no more than a quarter of an hour. But the time was past when childish games took that direction of their own accord. Shame, the companion of an evil conscience, had come with the years, and so increased my natural shyness that it was insuperable. Indeed, never at that time or since have I had the courage to make sexual proposals to any woman who has not more or less forced me to them by her advances, even when I have known that she was not prudish and that I was hardly likely to be rebuffed.

My disturbance of mind became so strong that, being unable to satisfy my desires, I excited them by the most extravagant behaviour. I haunted dark alleys and lonely spots where I could expose myself to women from afar off in the condition in which I should have liked to be in their company. What they saw was nothing obscene, I was far from thinking of that; it was ridiculous. The absurd pleasure I got from displaying myself before their eyes is quite indescribable. There was only one step for me still to make to achieve the experience I desired, and I have no doubt that some bold girl would have afforded me the

amusement, as she passed, if I had possessed the courage to wait. But this folly led to a catastrophe almost equally comical, but less entertaining to me.

One day I took up my position in the corner of a courtyard, in which was a well where the girls of the house often came to draw water. In this corner there were a few steps that led to some cellars by several entrances. In the dark I explored these subterranean passages and, finding them long and pitch black, came to the conclusion that they went on for ever and that if I were seen and surprised I should find a safe hiding-place there. Thus emboldened, I offered the girls who came to the well a sight that was laughable rather than seductive. The more sensible pretended that they had seen nothing. Others started laughing. Others considered themselves insulted and made a fuss. I rushed into my retreat, and was followed. I heard the voice of a man, which I had not reckoned with and which alarmed me. I plunged deeper into the passages, at the risk of losing myself; noise, voices, and that man's voice followed me still. I had counted on the darkness, I saw light. I shuddered and plunged on. I was stopped by a wall and could go no further. There I must await my fate. In a moment I was caught and seized by a big man with a big moustache, a big hat, and a big sword, escorted by four or five women each armed with a broom handle. Among them I saw the little wretch who had given me away, and who no doubt wanted to see me face to face.

The man with the sword took hold of my arm and asked me roughly what I was doing there. As can be imagined, I had no answer ready. I recovered myself however and, racking my brains at this critical moment, produced a romantic excuse which was accepted. I begged him in the humblest of tones to take pity on my youth and condition, claiming to be a young stranger of noble birth and to be suffering from a mental derangement. I said that I had run away from my father's house because they wanted to shut me up, and that if he gave me away I should be lost, but if he were so good as to let me go I might one day repay his kindness. Unlikely though it seemed, my appearance and my speech produced an effect; the terrible man was touched. He gave me a brief scolding, and quietly let me go without asking me any more questions. From the way that the girl and the old women scowled at me I concluded that the man I had been so frightened of had been very useful to me, and that, left to them alone, I should not have got off so cheaply. I heard them muttering something or other that I hardly paid attention to. For so long as the man and his sword

did not interfere I was quite confident that, being both nimble and vigorous, I could escape from them and their sticks.

Some days later when walking in the street with a young abbé who lived near me I ran into the man with the sword. He recognized me and remarked in mocking imitation of my voice: 'I am a prince. I am a prince and a coward. But don't let his Highness come back again.' I said no more but sneaked away with my head down, thanking him in my heart for his discretion. These confounded old women, I supposed, had made him ashamed of his credulity. Be that as it may, though he was a Piedmontese he was a good man and I never think of him without a feeling of gratitude. For the story was so ridiculous that anyone else in his place would have put me to shame, if only in order to raise a laugh. Though this incident did not have the consequences I might have feared it did not fail to make me cautious for a long time.

My stay with Mme de Vercellis had procured me several acquaintances, whom I cultivated in the hope that they would be useful to me. One of them was a Savoyard abbé, M. Gaime by name, tutor to the children of the Count de Mellarède. Him I sometimes went to see. He was still young and did not go much into society, but he was a man of sound sense, of intelligence and integrity. Indeed he was one of the most honest men I have ever met. He was of no help to me in the matter that I visited him for. He had not sufficient influence to get me a situation. Yet I gained more precious advantages from him, which have benefited me for the whole of my life. He gave me lessons in a sound morality and in the principles of common sense. In my succession of desires and fancies I had always struck too high or too low, always played either Achilles or Thersites; now hero, now scoundrel. M. Gaime took pains to put me in my place, to make me see myself as I was, neither sparing me nor discouraging me. He talked to me most frankly about my nature and my talents, saying however that he saw obstacles arising from them that might prevent my making good use of them. In his opinion, therefore, I should treat them not as steps by which to climb to fortune, but as a means of dispensing with fortune. He drew me a faithful picture of human life, of which I had only false ideas, and showed me how, when fate is adverse, a wise man can always strive for happiness and sail against the wind to attain it. He showed me that there is no true happiness without wisdom, and that wisdom is to be found in all conditions of life. He greatly diminished my admiration for worldly greatness by proving to me that those men

who control others are neither wiser nor happier than they. And he said a thing too which has often come back into my mind: that if every man could read the hearts of others there would be more men anxious to descend than to rise in life. The truth of that reflection is striking, and there is no exaggeration about it. By making me content to remain where I was, it has been most useful to me throughout my life. He gave me my first true ideas of honour, which my exaggerative genius had only grasped in its extreme forms. He made me see that lofty virtues and enthusiasms are of little use in society; that in riding too high a man risks a fall; that a succession of small duties always faithfully done demands no less than do heroic actions; that a man derives greater advantage from them to his honour and virtue, and that it is infinitely better always to have people's respect than sometimes to have their admiration.

In order to define the duties of man it was necessary to go back to their principles. Moreover, the step that I had just taken and of which my present state was the consequence led us to talk of religion. It will already be clear that good M. Gaime is, to a great extent at least, the original of the *Savoyard Vicar*. Prudence, however, compelled him to speak with more reserve than did my Vicar. On certain points, therefore his explanations were less frank. But for the rest his precepts, his sentiments, his opinions, and everything down to his advice to return to my own country, were exactly the same as those I have since given to the public. So I will not enlarge upon conversations whose substance anyone can read in my book, but merely say that though his lessons had at first no effect upon me for all their wisdom, they planted a seed of virtue and religion in my heart which has never been choked, and which only required the tending of a more beloved hand to bear fruit.

Although at that time my conversion was not very stable, I nevertheless felt moved. Far from growing tired of his conversations I came to value them for their clarity, their simplicity, and for a certain warmth of heart of which I felt they were full. I have an affectionate nature, and I have always been less attached to people for their actual kindnesses than for those they have intended to do me. And that is a subject upon which my instinct seldom deceives me. So I conceived a real affection for M. Gaime. I was, so to speak, his second pupil, and for the moment this had for me the inestimable advantage of deflecting me from the path to vice down which my state of idleness was drawing me.

One day I was most unexpectedly sent for by Count de la Roque. I had visited him so often without seeing him that I had grown tired of calling and went no more. I supposed that he had forgotten me, or had unpleasant memories of me. I was wrong. He had more than once noticed the pleasure with which I did my duties for his aunt. He had even spoken to her on the subject, and he spoke of it again to me when I had quite forgotten all about it. He received me kindly and said that, far from putting me off with idle promises, he had been trying to find me a place. Now he had succeeded, and was setting me on the way to make something of myself; the rest was up to me. The family with whom he placed me was an important and respected one, and no other patron was necessary to help me on. At first I should be treated as a simple servant, just as in my last post. But I could be confident that, should they judge me by my behaviour and disposition to deserve a better position, they would not be inclined to leave me where I was. The end of this speech cruelly belied the brilliant hopes inspired in me by its opening. 'What, always a lackey!' I reflected in a mood of bitterness which my confidence soon dispelled. I felt too ill-fitted for such a position to fear that I should be left in it long.

He took me to the Count de Gouvon, first equerry to the Queen and head of the illustrious house of Solar. This venerable old gentleman's dignified air made his very kind reception even more touching. He questioned me with interest and I replied with sincerity. He said to the Count de la Roque that I had pleasant features, which gave promise of intelligence; that indeed he thought I was not lacking in that respect, but that was not everything, and the rest remained to be seen. Then he turned to me and said: 'In almost everything, my child, the beginnings are hard. For you they will not be too hard, however. Be good and try to please everyone here. That for the present is your only duty. For the rest, have no fear, we intend to take care of you.' Immediately afterwards he took me to the Marchioness de Breil, his stepdaughter, and introduced me to her. Then he took me to the Abbé de Gouvon, his son. This beginning seemed to me a good augury. I had enough experience by now to know that people do not receive a new lackey with all that ceremony. In fact, I was not treated as one. I ate at the steward's table, they gave me no livery, and when the Count de Favria, an empty-headed young man, wanted to make me get up behind his carriage, his grandfather forbade my riding behind anyone's coach or attending anyone out of doors. I served at table, however, and indoors I acted more or less as a lackey. But I did so with very considerable

freedom, for I was not specifically appointed to anyone's service. Except for taking down a few letters and cutting out some pictures for the Count de Favria, I was almost master of my own time throughout the day. I was not conscious of being on my trial, but the test was a very rigorous one indeed, and somewhat unkind. For such lack of occupation might very well have led me into vices that I should never otherwise have contracted.

But fortunately this did not happen. M. Gaime's lessons had made an emotional impression upon me. In fact they so seized on my imagination that I sometimes stole out to go and hear them over again. No one, I think, who saw me slip away so furtively had any idea where I was going. Nothing could have been sounder than the advice which he gave me concerning my behaviour. I started off admirably. I charmed everybody by my thoroughness, my obedience and my zeal. The Abbé Gaime had wisely warned me to moderate my initial fervour, in case it should later relax and this falling-off be noticed. 'The way you begin,' he said, 'sets the standard for what will be asked of you. Manage, if you can, to do even more as time goes on, but be careful never to do less.'

Since no one had really troubled to assess my small talents, and since I was not credited with more than those I had by nature, it did not seem that they intended to make any proper use of me, despite what the Count de Gouvion had told me. M. Gouvion's son, the Marquis de Breil, was then ambassador in Vienna. Certain events took place at Court which had their effect on the family, and for some weeks there was a general excitement which hardly gave them a moment to think of me. Nevertheless, during that time I relaxed very little. There was one thing, however, which did me both good and harm, good by banishing all external distractions, harm by making me somewhat more careless in my duties.

Mlle de Breil was a well-formed young lady of more or less my own age and rather handsome. She was extremely fair with jet black hair and, though a brunette, had that sweet expression which one finds in blondes, and which my heart has never been able to resist. Court dress, so flattering to the young, brought out her pretty figure, revealed her breast and shoulders, and made her complexion still more dazzling, since at that time mourning was being worn. It may be observed that it is not a servant's business to observe such things. I was at fault, no doubt. But still I did observe them, and I was not the only one to do so. The steward and the valets discussed her sometimes over table with

a crudity which I found deeply distressing. My head, however, was not so turned as to make me absolutely in love with her. I did not forget myself, I kept in my place, and even my desires remained under control. I loved to see Mlle de Breil, to hear her say a few words that displayed her wit, her good sense, and her modesty. My ambition was limited to the pleasure of serving her, and went no further. At table I was always on the look-out for chances of asserting my rights. If her footman left her chair for a moment I took up my place there immediately. At other times I stood facing her, following her eyes to see what she might want and watching for the moment when I could change her plate. What would I not have done for her to give me a single order, a single glance, a single word! But no. To my mortification I meant nothing to her. She did not even notice that I was there. Her brother, however, did sometimes speak to me at table. On one occasion, indeed, when he said something to me that was pretty uncivil, I gave him so neat and smart an answer that she noticed it and threw me a glance. That glance was short enough, but it threw me into transports of delight. The next day I had the opportunity of earning another, and availed myself of it. They were giving a grand dinner, and on that occasion, to my great astonishment I saw the steward for the first time waiting with his hat on his head and his sword at his side. The conversation chanced to turn upon the motto of the house of Solar, which was embroidered on the tapestries around the coats of arms: 'Tel fiert qui ne tue pas.' As the Piedmontese are not as a rule perfect masters of French, someone discovered a spelling mistake in this motto, and said that the word *fiert* did not require a *t*.

The old Count de Gouvon was about to reply when, glancing at me, he saw that I was smiling, though I dared not say anything, and ordered me to speak. Whereupon I said that I did not consider the *t* superfluous, that *fiert* was an old French word which did not come from *ferus*, fierce, threatening, but from the verb *ferit*, he strikes, he wounds; so that the meaning of the motto appeared to me to be not 'some threaten' but 'some strike and do not kill.'

They all looked at me and exchanged glances in silence. Never in my life had I seen such astonishment. But what flattered me more was to see a look of pleasure on Mlle de Breil's face. That haughty young lady condescended to throw me a second glance, every bit as precious as the first. Then, turning towards her grandfather, she seemed to wait almost impatiently for him to give me the praise which was my due. Indeed he did compliment me so generously and whole-heartedly, and

with such an air of pleasure, that the whole table hastened to join in the chorus. That moment was short, but it was in every respect delightful. It was one of those rare moments that put things back in their proper perspective, repair the slights on true merit and avenge the outrages of fortune. Some minutes later Mlle de Breil lifted her eyes to me again and asked me in a shy but friendly voice to give her something to drink. Of course I did not keep her waiting. But when I came to her I was seized with such a trembling that I overfilled her glass, spilling some water on her plate, and over her. Her brother stupidly asked me why I was trembling. This question did not help to put me at my ease, and Mlle de Breil blushed to the whites of her eyes.

Here the romance ended, with the same ill-fortune as my affair with Mme Basile and others throughout my life; from which it will be observed that I am never lucky in the conclusion of my amours. I haunted Mme de Breil's ante-room, but to no purpose. I received not one further mark of attention from her daughter. She came in and went out without looking at me, and I scarcely dared to glance at her. I was so stupid and awkward indeed that one day when she had dropped her glove in passing, instead of dashing to recover that object, which I should have loved to smother with kisses, I had not the courage to move, but left it to be picked up by a great lout of a valet whom I would gladly have throttled. Then, to complete my discomfiture, I discovered that I had not the good fortune to please Mme de Breil. Not only did she never give me orders, but she never accepted my services; and twice when she found me in her ante-chamber she asked me very coldly whether I had nothing to do. I had to renounce that dear ante-chamber. At first I regretted it, but distractions intervened, and soon I never gave the matter a thought.

I had some consolation for Mme de Breil's disdain in the form of kindnesses from her father-in-law, who finally noticed my existence. On the evening of the dinner I have mentioned he had half an hour's conversation with me, with which he seemed well pleased, and which delighted me. This good old man had considerable intelligence, though less than Mme de Vercellis; but he had more heart than she, and I got on better with him. He told me to attach myself to his son, the Abbé de Gouvon, who had taken a liking to me, and that if I made use of his help and affection I might acquire those qualities, my lack of which stood in the way of their doing for me what they had a mind to do. The very next morning I hurried to Monsieur l'Abbé. He did not receive me as a servant, but made me sit down beside his fire and

questioned me most sympathetically. He soon discovered that though my education had begun in many subjects, it had been concluded in none. Finding especially that I knew very little Latin, he undertook to teach me some more, and we agreed that I should come to him each morning. I began on the next day. So, by one of those strange tricks that were to recur so often in the course of my life, I was at the same time above and below my station. I was a pupil and a valet in the same house, and, although a servant, had a tutor so highly born that he should have taught none but the children of princes.

The Abbé de Gouvion was a younger son, destined by his family for a bishopric; for which reason his studies had been more extensive than is usual in noblemen's children. He had been sent to the University of Siena, where he had spent some years, and he had come back with a considerable dose of purism,* which made him more or less the equivalent in Turin of the late Abbé Dangeau† of Paris. Dislike of theology had plunged him into literature – a very common occurrence in Italy among those intended for a priestly career. He had read the poets, and wrote tolerable verse in Latin and Italian. In brief, he had all the taste necessary to form mine and to introduce some order into the confused nonsense with which I had stuffed my head. But whether because in my chatter I had given a false idea of my knowledge, or because he could not stand the boredom of elementary Latin, he started me straight off at too advanced a stage. No sooner had he made me translate a few of Phaedrus's fables than he plunged me into Virgil, of whom I hardly understood a word. I was fated, as will be seen in the sequel, often to start Latin afresh but never to master it. Nevertheless I worked eagerly enough, and the abbé lavished his care on me with a kindness that I still remember with emotion. I spent a large part of each morning with him, partly in lessons and partly in his service; not in his personal service, for he would never allow me to wait on him, but writing at his dictation and copying letters. My secretarial duties indeed were more profitable to me than my actual tuition. For not only did I learn Italian in this way, in its purest form, but I acquired some taste for literature and some knowledge of good books, which I had not got from Mme La Tribu's library, and which was of great service to me later, when I began to work by myself.

This was the one time in my life when, without romantic exaggera-

* Cruscantism – the affectation of using only words authorized by the Accademia della Crusca of Florence.

† Seventeenth-century grammarian and member of the Académie Française.

tion, I might reasonably have allowed myself hopes for the future. The abbé was very pleased with me, and told everyone so; and his father had taken such a singular liking to me that, as I learnt from the Count de Favria, he had mentioned me to the King. Even Mme de Breil had abandoned her contemptuous attitude to me. In fact I became a sort of favourite in the house. This aroused great jealousy in the other servants. For when they saw me honoured by direct orders from their master's son, they realized that I was not meant to remain their equal for long.

Their intentions towards me I could only judge from a few words dropped at random, upon which I did not reflect till afterwards. It appeared that the Solar family were ambitious for at least ambassadorial posts, and perhaps even for ministerial office. They would have been glad therefore to mould in advance a man of merit and talents who, depending solely upon them, might eventually be received into their confidence and serve them faithfully. This plan of the Count de Gouvion's was noble, judicious, and generous, and truly worthy of a far-sighted and beneficent gentleman. But not only did I not then see the full extent of it; it was too wise, also, for my understanding and demanded too long a period of inferiority.

So crazy was I in my ambitions that I expected good fortune to come only through adventures. Seeing no woman's hand in it all, therefore, I viewed this method of advancement as slow, painful, and depressing. But the mere fact that there was no woman involved should have made me see the prospect as safer and more honourable. For the merits they attributed to me were assuredly higher than those which attract feminine patronage.

Everything was going forward admirably. I had won everybody's respect almost by storm. My tests were over, and my general reputation in the house was that of a young man of the highest expectations, who was not in his proper place but was expected to get there. But my proper place was not that generally assigned to me, and I was to reach it by far different roads. And here I am treating of one of my peculiar characteristics, which it is sufficient to present to the reader without reflection or comment.

Although there were many new converts of my kind in Turin, I did not like them and had never wished to see any of them. But I had met some Genevese who were not converted; among them a M. Mussard nicknamed Tord-gueule,* a miniature painter and a distant

* Wry-neck.

relative of mine. This M. Mussard traced me to the Comte de Gouvon's house, and came to see me there with another Genevese called Bâcle, who had been a comrade of mine in my apprenticeship. This Bâcle was a very amusing lad, extremely gay and full of comicalities which were attractive because of his youth. Here I was, then, suddenly captivated by M. Bâcle, so captivated indeed that I could not do without him. He was soon to leave and return to Geneva – and what a loss he would be to me! I felt that I should miss him exceedingly. But at least to make good use of the time left to me, I never departed from his side; or rather he did not depart from mine, for I did not so entirely lose my head at first as to go out of the house without permission and spend whole days with him. But soon they saw how entirely he occupied my time, and forbade him the door. Then I was so angry that, forgetting everything except my friend M. Bâcle, I waited neither on the abbé nor the count, and was never seen in the house at all. They scolded me, but I did not listen. They threatened me with dismissal. This threat was my undoing. For it made me envisage the possibility that Bâcle might not leave unaccompanied. From that moment I could think of no other pleasure, no other fate and no other future than that of travelling away with him. And in all this I could see nothing but the ineffable bliss of a journey, at the end of which, as a further joy, I could just glimpse Mme de Warens, but in the remote distance; for returning to Geneva was something that never even occurred to me. Mountains, meadows, woods, streams, and villages passed before my eyes in endless succession, each bringing new charms; the pleasures of that journey seemed about to absorb my whole life. I remembered with delight how entrancing it had been as I came. What would it be like to have not only all the joys of independence but a good-humoured travelling companion of my own age and tastes, and to be without check, restraint or duties, or any obligation to go or stay except at our own fancy? Only a fool would sacrifice such a prospect for ambitious plans, slow, difficult, and uncertain of fulfilment. And even supposing that one day they were to be realized, brilliant though they might be they would not be worth a quarter of an hour's real pleasure and liberty in my youth.

With my head full of this brilliant notion, I behaved in such a way as to succeed in getting myself dismissed, though indeed not without some difficulty. One evening, when I returned, the steward gave me my notice on behalf of the count. That was exactly what I had been wanting. For, well aware, in spite of myself, that my conduct was

extravagant, I behaved with injustice and ingratitude as well, in order to provide myself with an excuse. Thus I imagined that I could put them in the wrong and justify myself in my own eyes by claiming that my action had been forced upon me.

The next day, before my departure, I received a message from the Count de Favria that I was to go and speak to him. But as they saw that I had completely lost my head and was capable of ignoring this request, the steward informed me that not till I had done so would he pay me certain money which was intended for me, and which I certainly did not deserve. For as they did not wish to leave me in the position of valet, my wages had never been fixed.

Young and foolish though the Count de Favria was, he gave me a most sensible lecture on this occasion. I might even call it an affectionate talking-to, so flatteringly and touchingly did he speak of his uncle's concern and his grandfather's plans for me. Finally, after giving me a lively reminder of all that I was sacrificing to run to my own destruction, he offered to make my peace for me, demanding as sole condition that I should never see the little wretch again who had led me astray.

It was so plain that he was not saying all this of his own initiative that, despite my stupid blindness, I was sensible of my old master's kindness and felt touched. But my darling journey had seized too deeply on my imagination for anything to outweigh its attractions. I was quite out of my mind. I made myself hard, resisted more stiffly and stood on my dignity, replying that since I had been given notice I had accepted it; that it was too late to recall it now, and that whatever happened to me in life I was quite determined never to be dismissed twice from the same house. The young man was quite justifiably nettled and called me the names I deserved. He threw me bodily out of the room and shut the door after me. I went out in triumph, as if I had just won a great victory. But, fearing that I might have a second battle to fight, I was base enough to depart without going to thank the abbé for his kindnesses.

To conceive the degree of my madness at that moment, it is necessary to understand how liable my feelings are to be heated by the merest trifles, and how utterly my thoughts become immersed in any object that attracts them, however vain at times that object may be. The wildest, most childish and foolish schemes truckle to my favourite idea, and show me good reason to yield to it. Would anyone suppose that at nearly nineteen a lad could found his hopes of subsistence for the rest of his life on an empty bottle? But listen.

The Abbé de Gouvion had made me a present some weeks before of a very pretty little heron-fountain,* which gave me great delight. We constantly played with this fountain as we talked of our journey and so conceived the idea that the one might contribute to the other, and the toy be instrumental in adding days to our travels. For nothing was more curious than a heron-fountain. That fact was the foundation on which we built the edifice of our fortune. All we had to do in each village was to gather the peasants around our fountain, and victuals and good cheer would be showered on us in abundance. For we were both convinced that food costs nothing to those who produce it, and that if they do not stuff passers-by with good things it is through mere malice on their part. Everywhere we imagined nothing but feastings and weddings, and reckoned that, at no greater cost than the breath of our lungs and the water it used, our fountain would pay our way through Piedmont, Savoy, and France, and the whole world. We planned itineraries that never ended, and first we diverted our course for the north, rather for the pleasure of crossing the Alps than with any feeling that we should have to stop somewhere at last.

1731-1732 Such was the plan with which I set out, leaving without regret my protector, my tutor, my studies, my hopes, and my expectation of an almost assured fortune, to begin the life of a regular vagabond. It was farewell to the capital, to the Court, to ambition, pride, love, and the ladies, and to all the great adventures the hope of which had brought me there the year before. I departed with my fountain and my friend Bâcle, with a light purse but a heart overflowing with delight, and with no thought in my head but this peripatetic pleasure for which I had suddenly exchanged all my brilliant projects.

This extravagant journey proved almost as pleasant as I had expected, but not quite in the same way. For though our fountain amused the landladies and their female servants for a minute or two, we still had to pay when we left. But that hardly worried us, and we did not think seriously of using this resource till our money failed. An accident spared us the trouble. The fountain broke somewhere near Bramant, and indeed it was time. For, though neither of us cared to say so, we were both getting rather bored with it. Our misfortune made us gayer than

[* Rightly Hiero-fountain, after its inventor, Hiero of Alexandria; a toy that depended on air-pressure.]

ever, and we laughed a great deal at our foolishness in having forgotten that our clothes and shoes would wear out, or in having imagined that we could replace them by exhibiting our fountain. We continued our journey as blithely as we had begun it, but making a little more directly for our goal, which our fast dwindling purse made it necessary for us to reach.

At Chambéry I began to brood, not on the stupidity I had just committed – for no man ever passed the sponge so rapidly or so completely over the past as I – but on the welcome awaiting me from Mme de Warens. For I looked on her house absolutely as my home. I had written her an account of my reception at the Count de Gouvion's, and she knew on what footing I was there. Indeed, in congratulating me she had read me a wise lecture on the return I ought to make for the kindnesses I had received. She looked on my fortune as assured, so long as I did not destroy it by my own fault. What would she say on my arrival? It did not so much as occur to me that she might shut her door in my face. But I was afraid of the pain I should cause her. I was afraid of her reproaches, which I found harder to bear than poverty. I resolved to endure them all in silence, and to do everything to appease her. She was the only person in the whole world; to live in disgrace with her was inconceivable.

My chief worry was my travelling companion, with whom I had no desire to burden her, but whom I was afraid I could not easily get rid of. I prepared him for the separation by treating him with some coldness on the last day. The rascal understood me. For he was more of a madman than a fool. I was afraid that he would be hurt by my fickleness. I was wrong. My friend Bâcle took nothing to heart. Scarcely had we set foot in the town of Annecy than he said, 'Now you're home,' embraced me and said good-bye. Then he swung round on his heel and disappeared. I have never heard another word of him. Our acquaintance and our friendship lasted about six weeks in all. But their consequences will endure for the whole of my life.

How my heart beat as I approached Mme de Warens's house! My legs trembled beneath me, my eyes were covered with a mist. I could see nothing and hear nothing, I should have recognized nobody. Several times I was forced to stop in order to regain my breath and some self-control. Was it fear that I should not obtain the assistance I needed that so disturbed me? But does the fear of death by starvation cause such alarm in a lad of the age I was then? No, indeed. Proudly and truthfully I can affirm that never at any time in my life has self-interest

or want had the power to expand or contract my heart. In the course of an uneven life, memorable for its vicissitudes, I have often been without bread and shelter, but I have always looked on riches and poverty with the same eye. At need I could have begged or stolen like anyone else, but I was incapable of feeling distress at finding myself reduced to doing so. Few men have sighed as I have, few have shed so many tears in their lives. But never has poverty, or the fear of poverty, made me heave a sigh or shed a tear. I have been proof against fortune. For my soul has never known true blessings or disasters that depend on fortune alone. Indeed it is at times when I have lacked for nothing that I have felt myself the most miserable of mortals.

The moment I appeared before Mme de Warens her manner reassured me. I trembled at the first sound of her voice. I threw myself at her feet and in a transport of intense joy pressed my lips to her hand. I do not know whether she had received news of me, but I saw little surprise on her face, and no sign of grief. 'My poor little one,' she exclaimed in a caressing voice, 'so you've come back? I knew that you were too young to take that journey. But at least I'm glad that it did not turn out as badly as I feared.' Then she made me tell her my brief tale, which I did most faithfully, suppressing a few incidents, however, but otherwise neither sparing nor excusing myself.

There was the question of where I should stay. She consulted her chambermaid, and I hardly dared to breathe during their discussion. When I heard that I was to sleep in the house I could scarcely contain myself. I saw my little bundle carried up to the room that was to be mine with much the same feelings as Saint-Preux* when he saw his carriage put into Mme de Wolmar's* coach house. I had in addition the pleasure of hearing that this was to be no transitory favour. For at a moment when they thought that I was attending to something quite different I heard Mme de Warens remark: 'They can say what they like. But since Providence has sent him back to me, I am determined not to abandon him.'

So there I was, settled at last in her house. This, however, was still not the moment from which I date the happy period of my life, but it served to pave the way for it. Although the emotional sensibility that gives rise to real joy is a work of Nature, and perhaps innate in our constitutions, it stands in need of situations in which it can develop. Lacking the right circumstances, a man born with acute sensibility would feel nothing, and would die without ever having known his

* Two characters in Rousseau's novel *The New Héloïse*.

true nature. I had been more or less in that condition till then, and should have been so always perhaps had I never met Mme de Warens, or even, having known her, if I had not lived close to her for long enough to contract the sweet habit of affection with which she inspired me. I will venture to say that anyone who feels no more than love misses the sweetest thing in life. For I know another feeling, less impetuous perhaps but a thousand times more delightful, which is sometimes joined with love and sometimes separate from it. This feeling is something other than friendship, something less temperate and more tender. I do not think that it can be felt for anyone of the same sex. I have known friendship, at least, if ever a man has, and I have never had this feeling for any of my friends. This statement is obscure, but it will become clear in the sequel. Feelings can only be described in terms of their effects.

Mme de Warens lived in an old house, large enough to contain a fine spare room which she used as a drawing-room, and it was here that I was put. It gave on to the passage already described, in which our first interview took place, and from it, on the far side of the stream and the gardens, one could see the country. This view was not a matter of indifference to the room's young occupant. Now, for the first time since Bossey, I had green fields outside my windows. Always shut in by walls, I had had nothing on which to gaze but the roofs of houses and the grey of the streets. I was truly sensitive, therefore, to the charm and novelty of my new situation, which greatly increased my susceptibility to tender feelings. I thought of this charming landscape as an additional gift from my dear patroness, who seemed to have placed it there deliberately for me. There I took my place peacefully beside her, and saw her everywhere among the flowers and the greenery. Her charms and the charms of spring became one in my eyes. My heart, constricted till then, felt more free before this open prospect, and among the orchards my sighs found easier vent.

There was no such magnificence in Mme de Warens's house as I had seen at Turin. But there was neatness and decency, and a patriarchal abundance that is never to be found with pomp. She had little silver plate and no porcelain, no game in her kitchen nor imported wines in her cellar. But both her kitchen and her cellar were well stocked for everybody, and in earthenware cups she provided excellent coffee. Whoever came to see her was invited to dine with her or in the house; and no workman or messenger or caller ever left without having had something to eat or drink. Her domestic staff was made up of a rather

pretty chambermaid from Fribourg, called Merceret; of a valet from her own district, Claude Anet by name, of whom there will be more in the sequel; of a cook and of two hired chairmen when she went on a visit, which she seldom did. That is a good deal for a pension of two thousand *livres*. But her small income, well managed, would have been enough for all that in a country where the soil is good and money extremely scarce. Unfortunately economy was never her favourite virtue. She contracted debts, she paid them, her money never stayed in her purse but flowed away.

She ran her household in exactly the way I should have chosen myself, and naturally I was only too pleased to take advantage of it. What somewhat displeased me, however, was having to spend a long time over meals. At the first smell of the soup and of the other dishes she almost fell into a faint. Indeed she could hardly bear these smells at all, and took some time to recover from her nausea. But little by little she felt better. Then she began to talk, but ate nothing. It would be half an hour before she would take her first mouthful. I could have eaten my dinner three times over in this time. My meal was finished long before she had started hers. So I began again, to keep her company, and ate enough for two, without feeling any the worse for it.

In a word, I gave myself up to the sweet sense of well-being I felt in her company, a state of mind which was undisturbed by any concern as to the means of preserving it. Not being as yet in her close confidence, I supposed that the present state of affairs was likely always to continue. I found the same comforts again in her house in later days. But, knowing the true situation better, and seeing that she was anticipating her revenue, I was not able to enjoy them so calmly. Looking ahead always ruins my enjoyment. It is never any good foreseeing the future. I have never known how to avoid it.

From the first day the sweetest intimacy was established between us, and it continued to prevail during the rest of her life. 'Little one' was my name, hers was 'Mamma', and we always remained 'Little one' and 'Mamma', even when the passage of the years had almost effaced the difference between our ages. The two names, I find, admirably express the tone of our behaviour, the simplicity of our habits and, what is more, the relation between our hearts. To me she was the most tender of mothers, who never thought of her own pleasure but always of my good. And if there was a sensual side of my attachment to her, that did not alter its character, but only made it more enchanting. I was intoxicated with delight at having a young and pretty mamma

whom I loved to caress. I use *caress* in the strict sense of the word, for she never thought of grudging me kisses or the tender caresses of a mother, and it never entered my thoughts to abuse them. It will be objected that we had in the end a relationship of a different character. I agree. But wait, I cannot tell everything at the same time.

The sudden moment of our first meeting was the only truly passionate one she ever made me feel. But that moment was the product of surprise. My glances never went wandering indiscreetly beneath her kerchief, though an ill-concealed plumpness in that region might well have attracted them. I felt neither emotions nor desires in her presence; my state was one of blissful calm, in which I enjoyed I knew not what. I could have spent my life like that and eternity as well, without a moment's boredom. She is the only person with whom I never suffered from that inability to find words that makes the maintenance of conversation such a penance to me. Our time together was spent less in conversation than in one interminable gossip, which required an interruption to bring it to an end. I needed no compulsion to talk; it almost needed compulsion to silence me. As she often thought over her plans, she often fell into reveries. I let her dream on. I gazed on her in silence and was the happiest of men. I had another singular habit. I never claimed the favour of being alone with her, but I ceaselessly sought opportunities for private interviews, which I enjoyed with a passion that turned to fury whenever troublesome visitors came to disturb us. As soon as anyone arrived – whether man or woman, it did not matter which – I went out grumbling, for I could never bear to remain with a third party. Then I would stay in her ante-chamber, counting the minutes and continually cursing her eternal visitors, quite unable to conceive how they could have so much to say since I had so much more.

I only felt the full strength of my attachment to her when she was out of my sight. When I could see her I was merely happy. But my disquiet when she was away became almost painful. My inability to live without her caused me outbreaks of tenderness which often concluded with tears. I shall always remember how, on a Saint's day, while she was at vespers, I went for a walk outside the town, with my heart full of the thought of her and with a burning desire to spend my days beside her. I had sense enough to see that for the present this was impossible, that a happiness so deeply enjoyed must needs be short. This gave my thoughts a sad tinge, but not a gloomy one. For it was tempered by a flattering hope. The sound of the bells, which has always

singularly moved me, the song of the birds, the beauty of the day, the calm of the countryside, the scattered country dwellings, one of which I fancifully pictured as our common home – all these produced so vivid an impression upon me, raised in me so tender, sad, and touching a mood, that I saw myself ecstatically transported into that happy time and place in which my heart would possess everything it could desire, and in which I should enjoy it all with indescribable rapture, yet without so much as a thought of sensual pleasure. I do not remember ever having leapt into the future with greater force and illusion than I did then. And what has struck me most about my memory of this dream, now that it has been realized, is that eventually I found things exactly as I imagined them. If ever a waking man's dream seemed like a prophetic vision, that reverie of mine did. I was only deceived in my dream's seeming duration. For in it days and years and a whole life passed in changeless tranquillity, whilst in reality the whole experience was only a momentary one. Alas, my most lasting happiness was in a dream. Its fruition was almost immediately succeeded by my awakening.

I should never finish were I to describe in detail all the follies which the memory of my dear Mamma caused me to commit when I was out of her sight. How often have I kissed my bed because she had slept in it; my curtains, all the furniture of my room, since they belonged to her and her fair hand had touched them; even the floor on to which I threw myself, calling to mind how she had walked there! Sometimes even in her presence I fell into extravagances that seemed as if they could only have been inspired by the most violent love. One day at table, just as she had put some food into her mouth, I cried out that I had seen a hair in it. She spat the morsel back on her plate, whereupon I seized it greedily and swallowed it. In a word, there was but one difference between myself and the most passionate of lovers. But that difference was an essential one, and sufficient to render my whole condition inexplicable in the light of reason.

I had returned from Italy a different person from the one who had gone there. Perhaps no one of my age had ever come back in as strange a state as I. I had preserved my physical but not my moral virginity. The progress of the years had told upon me, and my restless temperament had at last made itself felt. Its first quite involuntary outbreak indeed had caused me some alarm about my health, a fact which illustrates better than anything else the innocence in which I had lived till then. Soon I was reassured, however, and learned that dangerous means of cheating nature, which leads in young men of my tempera-

ment to various kinds of excesses, that eventually imperil their health, their strength, and sometimes their lives. This vice, which shame and timidity find so convenient, has a particular attraction for lively imaginations. It allows them to dispose, so to speak, of the whole female sex at their will, and to make any beauty who tempts them serve their pleasure without the need of first obtaining her consent. Seduced by this fatal advantage, I set about destroying the sturdy constitution which Nature had restored to me, and which I had allowed sufficient time to ripen. Added to my temptations, too, were the circumstances in which I lived, in the house of a pretty woman, fondling her image in my secret heart, seeing her continually throughout the day, and surrounded at night by objects to remind me of her, lying in a bed where I knew she had lain. How much to stimulate me! Let the reader imagine my condition, and he will think of me as already half-dead! But I was far from it. What might have been my undoing was in fact my salvation, at least for a time. Intoxicated with the pleasure of living beside her, and burning with desire to spend my life with her, I saw in her always, whether she were absent or present, a tender mother, a beloved sister, a delightful friend, and nothing more. I saw her always in that way, as always the same, and never any other woman. Her picture was always present in my heart and left room for no one else. For me she was the only woman in the whole world; and the utter sweetness of the feelings she inspired in me, leaving my senses no time to be roused by others, safeguarded me against her and all her sex. In a word, I was chaste because I loved her. I cannot easily describe her effect upon me. But from its results any reader can judge the nature of my affection for her. All that I can say is that, extraordinary though this state of things may seem, in the sequel it will appear even more so.

I passed my days in the pleasantest possible way, although occupied with things that pleased me very little. There were plans to draw up, accounts to make fair copies of, recipes to transcribe, herbs to pick over, drugs to pound, stills to work. And in the midst of all this came crowds of travellers, beggars, and visitors of all kinds. I had to entertain a soldier, an apothecary, a canon, a fine lady, and a lay brother, all at the same time. I cursed and grumbled and swore, and wished the whole damned gang at the devil. But she took everything cheerfully, and my furies made her laugh till she cried. But what made her laugh even more was to see me get even angrier when I found that I could not prevent myself from laughing. These little interruptions when I enjoyed my grumble were quite delightful; and if a new interrupter

arrived while we were arguing, she knew how to extract amusement from that too by maliciously prolonging his visit and throwing me glances meanwhile for which I could cheerfully have beaten her. She could hardly prevent herself from laughing aloud when she saw me painfully restrained by good manners, and glaring at her like one possessed, although in my secret heart I could not help finding the whole situation extremely comical also.

All this, though not pleasing in itself, amused me nevertheless because it was part of a way of life that charmed me. Nothing that went on around me, nothing that I was made to do, suited my own taste, but everything pleased my heart. I think that I should have succeeded in eventually liking medicine, if my distaste for it had not given rise to those comical scenes which continually delighted us. This was perhaps the first time that the art of medicine had produced such humorous effects. I pretended to recognize a medical book by its smell, and the funny thing is that I was seldom wrong. She made me taste the loathsome drugs. I might run away or try to defend myself, but despite my resistance and the most horrible grimaces, despite struggles and clenched teeth, I had only to see those pretty fingers, all besmeared, approaching my face, and I was forced to open my mouth and lick them. When all her small household was thus assembled in one room, to judge by our running and shouting with laughter we might have been acting a farce instead of compounding opiates and elixirs.

My time was not entirely spent, however, in these pranks. I had found some books in the room I was given: *The Spectator*,* Puffendorf, Saint-Évremond, and the *Henriade*, and although I had lost my former mania for reading, I dipped into them when I had nothing else to do. *The Spectator* particularly pleased me, and improved my mind. The Abbé de Gouvion had taught me to read less voraciously and more reflectively. So I derived greater profit from my reading. I grew used to thinking about language and the niceties of style. I practised distinguishing between pure French and my provincial idioms. For instance I was cured of a mistake in spelling that I made in common with all Genevese, by these two verses from the *Henriade*:

Soit qu'un ancien respect pour le sang de leurs maîtres
Parlât encore pour lui dans le cœur de ses traîtres.†

[* Probably Addison's *Spectator*, but possibly a French imitation by Marivaux.]

† Perhaps an ancient respect for their masters' blood still spoke for him in those traitors' hearts.

I was struck by the word *parlât*, and it taught me that the third person singular of the subjunctive requires a *t*, whereas formerly I had written and pronounced the word *parla*, as if it had been the past tense in the indicative.

Sometimes I talked to Mamma about my reading. Sometimes I read to her, which gave me great delight. I practised reading well, and that was useful to me also. I have said that she had a cultivated mind, and at that time it was at its prime. Several men of letters had been at pains to win her favour and had taught her some standards of literary judgement. She had, if I may so put it, a somewhat Protestant taste. She talked a great deal about Bayle and set great store by Saint-Évremond, who had died some time before in France. But this did not hinder her knowledge of good literature, or prevent her from discussing it most intelligently. She had been brought up in refined society, and had come to Savoy while still young. So in pleasant intercourse with the Savoyard nobility she had thrown off the affectations of the Vaud country, where women consider attempts at wit a social asset and cannot speak except in epigrams.

Although she had only a passing acquaintance with the Court, she had learnt sufficient from one rapid glance to know it well. She always retained some friends there and, despite secret jealousies and the disapproval excited by her general behaviour and her debts, she never lost her pension.* She had some experience of the world, and the capacity for reflection that makes such experience profitable. This was a favourite subject of conversation with her, and it gave me, with my fantastic notions, just the sort of instruction I was most in need of. We read La Bruyère together, whom she preferred to La Rochefoucauld, a gloomy and depressing author, especially when one is young and does not care to see man as he is. When she moralized, she sometimes wandered off into vagueness. But if I kissed her lips or her hands from time to time I was able to endure her prolixities patiently to the end.

This life was too sweet to last. I felt that, and the fear of seeing it end was the one thing which disturbed my enjoyment of it. All the time she was fooling with me Mamma was studying and observing me, asking me questions and making plans for my future fortune, plans with which I would gladly have dispensed. Fortunately it was not merely a matter of knowing my inclinations, my tastes, and my little talents. It was necessary to find or prepare opportunities for bringing them out, and all this could not be done in a day. Even the mistaken

[* This is doubtful. She seems to have received no payments after 1749.]

estimate the poor woman had made of my abilities postponed the moment in which they would have to be displayed, since they made her more particular about the choice of means. In fact, thanks to her high opinion of me, everything played into my hands. But I had to climb down a peg or two, and then farewell to my peace of mind. A relative of hers, M. d'Aubonne by name, came to see her. He was a man of great intelligence, an intriguer and, like her, a great schemer, but he did not ruin himself by his schemes; he was a sort of adventurer. He had just suggested to Cardinal Fleury a very elaborate plan for a lottery, which had not found favour. So he was going to propose it at the Court of Turin, where it was adopted and carried out. He stayed at Annecy for some time, and there fell in love with the Intendant's wife, a very charming person, whom I greatly liked, and who was the only visitor I was glad to see at Mamma's. M. d'Aubonne saw me; Mme de Warens talked to him about me; he undertook to examine me and see what I was fit for and, if he found anything in me, to try and find me a post.

Mme de Warens sent me to him on two or three successive mornings, inventing some errand as a pretext and giving me no warning of her purpose. He very skilfully started me talking, treating me with some familiarity and putting me as much at my ease as he possibly could. Then, without seeming to observe me, he touched quite unaffectedly on all sorts of topics, trivial and otherwise, as if he had taken a fancy to me and was bent on an idle conversation. I was absolutely charmed by him. But the conclusion he came to was that, though I might not be a complete fool, I had not very much intelligence. For despite my promising appearance and lively features, he could not find an idea in my head or any trace of education. In short, I laboured under every sort of limitation, and the very highest I could ever aim was one day to become a village priest. Such was his report to Mme de Warens. This was the second or third time I had been judged in this way, and it was not to be the last; M. Masseron's verdict has often been repeated.

The cause of such misjudgements is too intimately connected with my character to be passed over without an explanation. For it cannot be supposed, in all conscience, that I accept them. Indeed, whatever M. Masseron, M. d'Aubonne, and others may have said, I cannot, with all due impartiality, help thinking them mistaken.

In me are united two almost irreconcilable characteristics, though in what way I cannot imagine. I have a passionate temperament, and

lively and headstrong emotions. Yet my thoughts arise slowly and confusedly, and are never ready till too late. It is as if my heart and my brain did not belong to the same person. Feelings come quicker than lightning and fill my soul, but they bring me no illumination; they burn me and dazzle me. I feel everything and I see nothing; I am excited but stupid; if I want to think I must be cool. The astonishing thing is, though, that I have considerable tact, some understanding, and a certain skill with people so long as they will wait for me. I can make excellent replies impromptu, if I have a moment to think, but on the spur of the moment I can never say or do anything right. I could conduct a most delightful conversation by post, as they say the Spaniards play chess. When I read the story of that Duke of Savoy who turned round on his homeward journey to cry, 'Mind out, my fine Paris merchant!' I recognize myself.

But I do not suffer from this combination of quick emotion and slow thoughts only in company. I know it too when I am alone and when I am working. Ideas take shape in my head with the most incredible difficulty. They go round in dull circles and ferment, agitating me and overheating me till my heart palpitates. During this stir of emotion I can see nothing clearly, and cannot write a word; I have to wait. Insensibly all this tumult grows quiet, the chaos subsides, and everything falls into place, but slowly, and after long and confused perturbations. Have you ever been to the opera in Italy? During changes of scenery wild and prolonged disorder reigns in their great theatres. The furniture is higgledy-piggledy; on all sides things are being shifted and everything seems upside down; it is as if they were bent on universal destruction; but little by little everything falls into place, nothing is missing, and, to one's surprise, all the long tumult is succeeded by a delightful spectacle. That is almost exactly the process that takes place in my brain when I want to write. If I had known in the past how to wait and then put down in all their beauty the scenes that painted themselves in my imagination, few authors would have surpassed me.

This is the explanation of the extreme difficulty I have in writing. My blotted, scratched, confused, illegible manuscripts attest to the pain they have cost me. There is not one that I have not had to rewrite four or five times before sending it to the printer. I have never been able to do anything with my pen in my hand, and my desk and paper before me; it is on my walks, among the rocks and trees, it is at night in my bed when I lie awake, that I compose in my head; and

you can imagine how slowly, for I am completely without verbal memory and have never been able to memorize half a dozen verses in my life. Some of my paragraphs I have shaped and reshaped mentally for five or six nights before they were fit to be put down on paper. It is for that reason that I am more successful in works that demand labour than in things which need a light touch. I have never caught the knack of letter-writing, for instance; it is a real torture to me. I never write a letter on the most trivial subject that does not cost me hours of weariness. For if I try to put down immediately what comes to me, I do not know how to begin or end; my letter is a long, muddled rigmarole, and scarcely understandable when it is read.

But not only do I find ideas difficult to express, I find them equally difficult to take in. I have studied men, and I think I am a fairly good observer. But all the same I do not know how to see what is before my eyes; I can only see clearly in retrospect, it is only in my memories that my mind can work. I have neither feeling nor understanding for anything that is said or done or that happens before my eyes. All that strikes me is the external manifestation. But afterwards it all comes back to me, I remember the place and the time, the tone of voice and look, the gesture and situation; nothing escapes me. Then from what a man has done or said I can read his thoughts, and I am rarely mistaken.

Seeing that I am so little master of myself when I am alone, imagine what I am like in conversation, when in order to speak to the point one must think promptly of a dozen things at a time. The mere thought of all the conventions, of which I am sure to forget at least one, is enough to frighten me. I cannot understand how a man can have the confidence to speak in company. For not a word should be uttered without taking everyone present into account, without knowing their characters and their histories, in order to be certain of not offending anyone. In that respect men who live in society are at a great advantage. Knowing better what not to say, they are more certain of what they say. But even then they often make blunders. Consider then the predicament of a man who has come in out of the blue; it is almost impossible for him to talk for a moment without blundering.

In private conversation there is another difficulty, which I consider worse, the necessity of always talking. You have to reply each time you are spoken to, and if the conversation fails, to set it going again. This unbearable constraint would be enough in itself to disgust me with

society. I can think of no greater torture than to be obliged to talk continually and without a moment for reflection. I do not know whether this is just an aspect of my mortal aversion to any sort of compulsion, but I have only to be absolutely required to speak and I infallibly say something stupid. But what is even more fatal is that, instead of keeping quiet when I have nothing to say, it is at just those times that I have a furious desire to chatter. In my anxiety to fulfil my obligations as quickly as possible I hastily gabble a few ill-considered words, and am only too glad if they mean nothing at all. So anxious am I to conquer or hide my ineptitude that I rarely fail to make it apparent. Among countless examples which I could cite I will relate one, which does not belong to my youth but to a time when I had lived for some while in society. By then I should have acquired a social manner and ease if that had been possible. One evening I was with two fine ladies* and one gentleman whom I can name; it was the Duke de Gontaut. There was no one else in the room, and I compelled myself to contribute a few words – goodness knows what – to a four-cornered conversation, in which the other three had certainly no need of my help. The mistress of the house sent for a laudanum draught which she took twice a day for her digestion. The other lady, seeing her make a wry face, asked with a laugh, ‘Is that from Doctor Tronchin’s prescription?’ ‘I don’t think so,’ answered the first lady in the same light tone. ‘That’s about as good as she deserves,’ put in the gallant Rousseau in his witty way. Everyone was speechless; there was not a word, there was not a smile, and the next moment the conversation took another turn. Addressed to anyone else this blunder might have been only silly, but said to a lady too charming not to have some stories attached to her name, a lady whom I had certainly no wish to offend, it was dreadful; and I think the two witnesses of my discomfiture had all they could do not to burst out laughing. That is the kind of witticism I produce when I feel I must speak, but have nothing to say. It will be a long time before I forget that occasion. For not only is it very vivid in itself, but it had consequences that remain in my head to remind me of it only too often.

I think that I have sufficiently explained why, though I am not a fool, I am very often taken for one, even by people in a good position to judge. Unfortunately for me too, my face and my eyes seem to

[* The Duchess de Luxembourg and Mme de Mirepoix. This incident is mentioned again in Book X.]

promise otherwise, and people find my stupidity all the more shocking because it disappoints their expectations. This fact, which explains one situation in particular, is not irrelevant to what follows. It presents the key to a great number of my strange actions, which witnesses have attributed to a morose disposition that I do not possess. I should enjoy society as much as anyone, if I were not certain to display myself not only at a disadvantage but in a character entirely foreign to me. The role I have chosen of writing and remaining in the background is precisely the one that suits me. If I had been present, people would not have known my value; they would not even have suspected it. That indeed was the case with Mme Dupin, although she was an intelligent woman and I had lived several years in her house; she told me so very often, herself, in after years. But, of course, this rule has certain exceptions, and I will return to them later on.

So, with my talents assessed and the position that suited me decided, the question only remained, once more, of fitting me for my vocation. The difficulty was that I had never studied and did not even know enough Latin for a priest. Mme de Warens had the idea of getting me taught at the seminary for a while. She discussed the matter with the Father Superior, a Lazarist called M. Gros, a nice little man, rather blind in one eye, very thin and grey-haired. He was the most amusing and least pedantic Lazarist I have ever met, which indeed is not saying much.

Sometimes he came to see Mamma, and she welcomed him, patted him, teased him, and sometimes let him lace her stays, an office which he performed most willingly. While he was thus engaged, she would run about the room from one side to the other, doing something here and something there, and M. Gros would follow at the end of the stay-lace, scolding her and repeating every minute: 'Madame, madame, do stand still.' It made rather a pretty picture.

M. Gros fell in gladly with Mamma's plans, agreeing to take a very modest fee, and undertaking to supervise my instruction. All that was now needed was the bishop's consent, and he not only gave it but offered to pay for my education himself. He also gave me permission to go on wearing secular dress until they could judge, by an examination, what success they could expect with me.

What a change! But I had to submit. I went to the seminary as if to the scaffold. A seminary is a melancholy abode, particularly for anyone coming from the house of a charming lady. I took with me a

single book which I had begged Mamma to lend me, and it proved a great resource. No one will guess what sort of book it was; it was a book of music. Among the talents she had cultivated, music had not been forgotten. She had a good voice, sang fairly well, and played the harpsichord a little. She had been so kind indeed as to give me some singing lessons; and she had had to begin at the beginning, for I hardly knew the tunes of our own psalms. Eight or ten lessons from a woman, perpetually interrupted, far from enabling me to sing the sol-fa did not teach me to read a quarter of the notes. But I had such a passion for singing that I decided to practise on my own. Even the book I had with me – the *Cantatas of Clérambault* – was not one of the easiest. But it will be plain how persistently and perseveringly I worked when I say that with no knowledge of transposing or of quantity I managed to decipher and sing without a mistake the first recitative and air from the cantata, 'Alphæus and Arethusa', though it is true that the air is so set that you have only to recite the verses in their proper rhythm to catch the phrasing.

There was one confounded Lazarist in the seminary who bothered me, and made me dislike the Latin he was trying to teach me. His hair was straight and black and greasy, he had the face of a gingerbread man, the voice of a buffalo, a stare like an owl's, and boar's bristles for a beard. His smile was sarcastic, and his limbs jerked like a marionette's. I have forgotten his beastly name, but his frightening, sickly sweet features have stuck in my head. I have only to remember them, and I tremble. I can still see him meeting me in the corridor and graciously holding out his filthy square cap as a sign that I must enter that room of his, which to me was more dismal than a dungeon. Imagine the contrast between a master like that and the abbé at Court whose disciple I had once been!

If I had remained for two months at the mercy of this monster, I am certain that I should not have preserved my sanity. But kind M. Gros saw that I was depressed, that I did not eat and was getting thin, and guessed the cause of my trouble – which was not difficult. So he rescued me from the creature's clutches and, by way of a striking contrast, consigned me to the mildest of men, to M. Gâtier, a young priest from Le Faucigny, who was studying at the seminary. To oblige M. Gros and, I think, out of humanity too, he was so good as to spare from his hours of study enough time to supervise mine. I have never seen a more touching expression than M. Gâtier's. He was a fair man with a reddish beard, and like the generality of people

from his district, he concealed considerable intelligence beneath a coarse exterior. But the most remarkable thing about him was his sensitiveness, and his affectionate, loving nature. In his large blue eyes there was such a mixture of sweetness, tenderness, and melancholy that one had only to see him to be struck by him. Judging by his expression and his tone of voice, one would have said that he foresaw his fate, and knew that he had been born to be unhappy.

His character did not belie his appearance; so patient and obliging was he that he seemed rather to be studying with me than teaching me. I would have loved him for far less; his predecessor had predisposed me to do so. Nevertheless, despite all the time he gave me, and despite all the goodwill we both brought to the task, and despite his very able methods, I made little progress, hard though I worked. It is strange that, though I have enough brains, I have never been able to learn anything from any master except my father and M. Lambercier. What little more I know I have taught myself, as will be shown hereafter. My mind is impatient of any sort of restraint, and cannot subject itself to the rules of the moment. The mere fear of not learning prevents my paying attention. So as not to exasperate my instructor I pretend to understand. He goes ahead and I do not grasp a thing. My mind needs to go forward in its own time, it cannot submit itself to anyone else's.

The time for ordinations had arrived, and M. Gâtier returned to his province as deacon, carrying with him my regrets, my affection, and my gratitude. I made vows on his behalf which were no more answered than those I have made for myself. Some years later I learned that when curate of a parish he had got a girl with child. Notwithstanding his tender heart, she was the only one he had ever been in love with. There was a frightful scandal, for the diocese was most strictly governed, and priests, by rights, should never have children except by married women. For his breach of this convention he was imprisoned, his reputation was destroyed, and he was dismissed. I do not know whether he was able to re-establish himself later. But my feeling for his misfortune, which was deeply engraved in my heart, recurred to me as I wrote *Émile* and, combining M. Gâtier with M. Gaime, I made these two excellent priests the models for my Savoyard vicar. I flatter myself that the imitation has not dishonoured the originals.

Whilst I was at the seminary M. d'Aubonne was obliged to leave Annecy. The Intendant took it into his head to dislike that gentle-

man's making love to his wife. It was the conduct of a dog in a manner. For although Mme Corvezi was a charming woman, he lived on very bad terms with her; his exotic tastes rendered her useless to him, and he treated her with such brutality that a separation was discussed. M. Corvezi was an ugly fellow, as black as a mole and as thievish as an owl; and owing to his continual injustices he ended by getting himself dismissed. The people of Provence are said to revenge themselves on their enemies by songs. M. d'Aubonne took vengeance upon his by a comedy. He sent the piece to Mme de Warens, and she showed it to me. It pleased me, and gave me a fancy for writing one myself, to see whether I was really so stupid as the author of that play had alleged. But it was not till I was in Chambéry that I carried out my idea, and wrote *The Self-lover*.^{*} So when I stated in the preface to that play that I had written it at eighteen I lied to the extent of some years.

It was at about this time that an event occurred which was not very important in itself, but which had consequences for me, and made some noise in the world when I had forgotten it. I had permission to leave the house once a week, and I have no need to say what use I made of my free time. One Sunday when I was at Mamma's, a building belonging to the Franciscans, which adjoined her house, caught fire. This building contained their oven, and was crammed to the roof with dry faggots. In a very short time the whole place was alight; and our house was in great peril, being enveloped in the flames which the wind drove in its direction. Everyone got ready to make a hasty move and to carry the furniture into the garden, which was outside the windows of my old room and on the far side of the stream I have spoken of. I was so agitated that I hurled everything out of those windows indiscriminately as it came to my hand, including a great stone mortar, which at any other time I should have had difficulty in lifting; and I was on the point of throwing a large mirror after it, when I was stopped. The good bishop, who had come to see Mamma that day, was not idle either. He led her out into the garden, and there began to pray with her and with all who were present. So that when I came out, some time later, I found everyone on their knees and knelt like the rest. During the holy man's prayer the wind changed, but so suddenly and at so fortunate a moment that the flames, which enveloped the house and were already darting through the windows, were blown to the other side of the courtyard, and the house remained completely unharmed. Two years later, after M. de

^{*} *Narcisse ou L'Amant de lui-même.*

Bernex was dead, his old order, the Antonines, began to collect evidence that might serve for his beatification. At the request of Father Boudet, I added to these documents an attestation of the fact which I have just described, which was the right thing to do; but what was wrong of me was to suggest that this occurrence was a miracle. I had seen the bishop at prayer, and during his prayer I had seen the wind change; so much I could both state and testify. But that one of these two happenings was the cause of the other I ought not to have certified, because I could not know. However, in so far as I can remember my thought at that time, when I was still a sincere Catholic, I acted in good faith. Love of the marvellous – so natural to the human heart – my veneration for that virtuous priest, and secret pride at having perhaps myself contributed to the miracle, helped to lead me astray. One thing is certain: if this miracle had been the result of the most fervent prayer, I should have been justified in claiming my part in it.

More than thirty years later, when I had just published my *Letters from the Mountain*,* M. Fréron somehow or other managed to unearth this testimony, and made use of it in his paper. It was a fortunate discovery, I must admit, and its relevance was most amusing, even to me.

I was destined to be rejected by every profession. Although M. Gâtier gave the least unfavourable account of my progress that he possibly could, it was obvious that my results were disproportionate to my efforts, and that did not serve to encourage me in my further studies. The bishop and the superior, therefore, lost interest in me, and I was returned to Mme de Warens as a creature not even fit to be trained as a priest. I was a nice enough lad otherwise, they said, and had no vices; which was her reason for not abandoning me even in the face of so many discouraging judgements against me.

I brought home her music book in triumph, having made such good use of it. That air from 'Alpheus and Arethusa' was almost all I had learnt at the seminary. My marked taste for this art gave her the idea of making me a musician. The opportunity was favourable. There was music at her house at least once a week, and the choir-master of the cathedral, who conducted these little concerts, came to see her very often. He was a Parisian by the name of M. le Maître, a good composer, very brisk and gay, still young, quite handsome, not very intelligent, but on the whole a very good fellow. Mamma

* *Lettres de la montagne.*

introduced me to him; I took a liking to him, and he did not dislike me. There was some discussion about my board, and an arrangement was made. In short I moved to his house, and there I spent the winter, all the more pleasantly since it was only twenty yards away from Mamma's, and we were with her in a minute. Very often we both went to supper with her.

It will readily be imagined that life at the choirmaster's, where all was song and gaiety, in the company of the musicians and the choir-boys, pleased me far better than my existence in the seminary with the Lazarist fathers. But my new life, though freer, was no less orderly and regular. I was born to love independence, but never to abuse it. For six whole months I never went out once – except to go to Mamma's or to church – and I was not even tempted to do so. This period is one of those in which I enjoyed the greatest calm, and which I have remembered ever since with the utmost pleasure. Of the various situations in which I have found myself some have been marked by such a feeling of well-being that when I remember them I am as much moved as if I were in them still. Not only do I recall times and places and persons but all the objects surrounding them, the temperature of the air, the smells and colours, and a certain local impression only to be felt there, the sharp recollection of which carries me back there again. For instance, all the tunes they practised at the choirmaster's; all those they sung in the choir; the canons' fine and imposing robes; the priests' chasubles; the cantors' mitres, the musicians' faces; one old lame carpenter who played the bass-viol; a fair little priest who played the violin; the ragged cassock which M. le Maître threw over his lay clothes, having first unbuckled his sword, and the grand, fine surplice which hid his rags when he was going into the choir; the pride with which I went, with my little flageolet in my hand, to take my place with the orchestra in the gallery and play a little solo piece that M. le Maître had composed especially for me; the good dinner which awaited me afterwards, and the good appetite we brought to it: all these things, sharply outlined in my memory, have charmed me countless times in retrospect, as much and even more than they did in reality. I have always retained a warm affection for a certain setting of the 'Conditor Alme Siderum' in common time, because one Advent Sunday, before daybreak, I heard them from my bed singing that hymn on the steps of the cathedral, according to the custom of that church. Mlle de Merceret, Mamma's chambermaid, knew a little music; and I shall never forget a little *Afferte* motet

which M. le Maître made me sing with her and to which her mistress listened with such pleasure. But everything, down to the good maid Perrine who was so nice and whom the choirboys so tormented, everything that I remember about those innocent and happy times comes back to me often now, to delight and sadden me.

I had been living at Annecy for almost a year without incurring the slightest reproach; everyone was pleased with me. I had committed no follies since leaving Turin, nor did I commit any so long as I was under Mamma's eye. She guided me, and she always guided me well. My attachment to her had become my sole passion; and what proves that it was no infatuation is that my heart gave shape to my understanding. It is true that one single feeling, absorbing – as it were – all my faculties, put me out of the condition in which I could learn anything, even music, although I made every effort. It was no fault of mine. The will was there, completely, and the application too. But I was distracted; I dreamed and sighed. What could I do about it? Nothing that depended on me was holding up my progress; but all I needed in order to commit fresh follies was that some subject should arise to inspire them. The subject presented itself. Chance arranged the circumstances and, as will be seen in the sequel, my natural perversity turned them to its advantage.

One evening in February, when it was very cold and we were all sitting around the fire, we heard a knock at the front door. Perrine took her lantern, went down to open it, and returned with a young man, who came upstairs and introduced himself with an easy air, paying M. le Maître a short and neatly turned compliment. He described himself as a French musician forced by the poor state of his finances to deputize at church services in order to pay his way. At the words 'French musician' the good M. le Maître's heart gave a bound; he was passionately attached to his country and his profession. He welcomed the young traveller, and offered him hospitality, of which he seemed to stand in great need and which he accepted without much ceremony. I examined him as he warmed himself and chatted, whilst waiting for supper. He was short in stature, but broad-shouldered, and he had something misshapen about his figure though no real deformity. He was, so to speak, a hunchback without a hump, but I think that he limped slightly. His black coat was worn out rather by use than by age, and was falling to pieces; his shirt was of very fine linen but extremely dirty; he wore beautiful fringed ruffles, gaiters into either of which he could have put both his legs and, to

protect himself from the snow, a little hat fit only to be carried under the arm. About this comical attire there was, nevertheless, an air of nobility, which his bearing did not belie. His expression had both intelligence and charm in it; he spoke easily and well, though his language was rather too free. Everything about him suggested a young rake who had received some education, and did not go begging like any other beggar but out of some freak of his own. He told us that his name was Venture de Villeneuve, that he came from Paris, that he had lost his way; and forgetting for a moment his role of musician, he added that he was travelling to Grenoble to see a relative of his in the courts.

Over supper the talk was of music; and he spoke well on the subject. He knew all the great performers, all the famous works, all the actors, all the actresses, all the pretty ladies, and all the great gentlemen. He seemed familiar with everything that was alluded to. But directly a subject was mentioned he interrupted the conversation with some broad joke, which made everyone laugh and forget what had been said. It was Saturday, and next day there would be music in the cathedral. M. le Maître suggested that he should sing. 'With the greatest of pleasure.' Being asked what part he sang, he said 'Alto', and changed the conversation. Before he went into church he was offered his part to look through, but he did not cast a glance at it. This piece of swagger surprised Le Maître. 'You'll see,' he whispered in my ear, 'he doesn't know a note of music.' 'I'm afraid you are right,' I replied. I followed them in great perturbation. As they began my heart beat most violently, for I was greatly interested in him.

I had soon reason to be reassured. He sang his two recitatives without a fault and in the best of imaginable taste. What is more, he had a very pleasing voice. Hardly ever have I had so pleasant a surprise. After mass, M. Venture was overwhelmed with compliments by the canons and the players, to which he replied by more buffoonery but with perfect grace. M. le Maître embraced him heartily, and I did the same. He saw how pleased I was, and this seemed to give him pleasure.

The reader will agree, no doubt, that after falling for M. Bâcle who, when all is said and done, was no more than an oaf, I was quite capable of becoming infatuated with M. Venture, who had education, talents, wit, and worldly experience, and who might be called a charming rake. That is what happened to me and what, I think, would have happened to any other young man in my place and all the more easily, since anyone else would have had a better nose than

mine for recognizing merit, and have been even more liable to be fascinated by it. For M. Venture indisputably had merit, and he had in addition a virtue rare at his age, that of not being over eager to display his accomplishments. It is true that he boasted of many things that he knew nothing of. But about those which he did know, and these were fairly numerous, he said nothing at all. He waited for an opportunity of showing them off and availed himself of it when it came with a lack of eagerness which made the very greatest impression. As he stopped after each subject and did not broach another, no one could tell when he had shown off all he knew. Witty, droll, indefatigable, and seductive in conversation, always smiling and never laughing, he said the coarsest things in the most elegant tone, so that they passed without objection. Even the most modest of women were astonished at what they endured from him. It was no good their thinking that they ought to be annoyed, it was more than they could manage. But he had no use for any but loose women. I do not think that he was made for success with the ladies, but rather to bring immense entertainment to the company of those who were. With such pleasing accomplishments, in a country where they are recognized and loved, it would have been strange if he had remained for long confined to the sphere of a musician.

My liking for M. Venture, for which I had more reasonable grounds than for my friendship for M. Bâcle, was also, although warmer and more lasting, less extravagant in its effects. I enjoyed seeing him and listening to him. Everything he did seemed to me charming, everything he said seemed to me an oracle. But my infatuation did not go so far that I could not part with him. I had close at hand a good safeguard against that excess. Moreover, though I found his precepts excellent for him, I was conscious that they did not apply to me; I required another sort of pleasure, of which he had no idea, and of which I did not even dare speak to him, being quite certain that he would make fun of me. However, I should have been glad to bring my attachment to him into alliance with my dominating passion. I spoke of him ecstatically to Mamma, and Le Maître too was loud in his praises. So she agreed that he should be introduced to her. But their interview was not at all a success. He found her affected, she found him a rake and was alarmed to think that I had made so undesirable an acquaintance. Not only, therefore, did she forbid me to bring him again, but so graphically did she describe the dangers I was running in that young man's company that I became a little more

reserved in my relations with him; and most fortunately for my ideas and my morals we were soon separated.

M. le Maître had a musician's tastes; he was fond of wine. At table, nevertheless, he was temperate, but when working in his room he could not help drinking. His maid-servant knew him so well that as soon as he prepared his paper in order to compose and took up his cello, his jug and his glass appeared instantly, and this jug was refilled from time to time. Without ever being absolutely drunk he was nearly always in liquor; and indeed it was a pity, for fundamentally he was a good lad and so gay that Mamma always called him the *gittien*. Unfortunately he was fond of his art, worked hard, and drank in proportion. This affected his health, and finally his temper; he was sometimes suspicious and easily offended. Incapable of rudeness and incapable of slighting anyone, he never uttered a harsh word even to his choirboys; but neither was anyone allowed to slight him, which was only fair. The trouble was that he had not the intelligence to distinguish shades of voice or character, and often took offence about nothing.

The ancient Chapter of Geneva, to which so many princes and bishops once considered it an honour to belong, has in its exile lost its former splendour, though it has retained its pride. In order to be admitted it is still necessary to be a nobleman or a doctor of the Sorbonne; and if there is one quality of which it is pardonable to boast next after that of personal merit, it is that which is derived from birth. Priests in general, moreover, usually treat any laymen in their service in a fairly high-handed way; and that is how the canons often treated poor Le Maître. The precentor especially, the Abbé de Vidonne, who was a very courteous man in other respects, though too full of his own nobility, did not always show him the respect that his talents deserved; and Le Maître did not bear these indignities willingly. In Passion Week that year they had a more serious quarrel than usual at a regulation dinner given by the bishop to the canons, to which Le Maître was always invited. The precentor showed him some discourtesy, and followed it with harsh words that Le Maître could not swallow. So he immediately made up his mind to depart next night; and nothing could dissuade him, though when he went to say good-bye to Mme de Warens she tried her hardest to calm him down. He could not resist the pleasure of avenging himself upon his tyrants by leaving them in the lurch in Easter Week, the time when they had most need of him. But what concerned him most was his music,

which he wanted to take with him. This was not easy, for it filled a fairly large box, which was quite heavy and could not be carried under the arm.

Mamma did what I should have done in her place, and what I should still do now. After considerable and fruitless efforts to hold him back, she saw that he had made up his mind to depart, whatever happened, and so, resigning herself, gave him what help she could. I will go so far as to say that this was her duty. Le Maître had, in a sense, dedicated himself to her service; whether it was a matter of his art or of obliging her in other ways, he was entirely at her disposition; and the devotion with which he obeyed her doubled the value of his attentions. It was merely a matter of repaying a friend at a critical moment, for all he had done for her on occasions over the last three or four years. But she had a heart which had no need to think of a service as an obligation in order to perform it. She sent for me and ordered me to go with M. le Maître at least as far as Lyons, and to stay with him for so long as he had need of me. She has since confessed to me that the wish to separate me from Venture had been an important factor in this decision. She consulted Claude Anet, her faithful servant, about the transport of the box. His opinion was that if we hired a beast of burden at Annecy we should inevitably be discovered. What we must do, as soon as it was dark, was to carry the box for a certain distance, and then hire a donkey in some village to carry it as far as Seyssel, where we should be on French territory and no longer running any risk. Following his advice, we set out at seven o'clock that same evening, and Mamma, on the pretext of paying my expenses, supplemented the small purse of her poor *kitten* by a sum which cannot have been useless to him. Claude Anet, the gardener, and I carried the box as best we could to the first village, where we were relieved by a donkey; and that same night we reached Seyssel.

I think I have already observed that there are times when I am so unlike myself that I might be taken for someone else of an entirely opposite character. Now we shall have an example. M. Reydelet, the priest at Seyssel, was a canon of St Peter's, and consequently acquainted with M. le Maître. He was therefore one of the men from whom it was most necessary for him to hide. My advice, on the contrary, was that we should go and call on him and, offering some excuse or another, ask him for a night's lodging, as if we were there with the sanction of the Chapter. So we went boldly to M. Reydelet,

who received us very kindly. Le Maître told him that he was going to Belley, at the bishop's request, to direct the Easter music there, and that he reckoned to be back in a few days. And to support his lie I strung together a hundred more, so naturally that M. Reydelet thought me a charming lad, took a fancy to me and made much of me. We were well feasted, and given good beds. M. Reydelet could not be too kind to us and we separated as the best friends in the world, promising to stop longer on our return journey. We could scarcely wait till we were alone before we burst out laughing, and I confess that I laugh still at the mere thought of it. For no one could conceive of a more sustained or successful practical joke. It would have entertained us for the whole of our journey if M. le Maître, who drank incessantly and rambled in his speech, had not been taken two or three times with fits, to which he was subject and which were very like epilepsy. This put me into the most alarming quandaries, and soon I was thinking of any possible way of escape.

We went to Belley to spend Easter, as we had told M. Reydelet we should, and although we were not expected we were received by the choirmaster and gladly welcomed by all. M. le Maître was respected as a musician, and he deserved to be. The Belley choirmaster did himself credit by producing his best works, in an endeavour to win the praise of such a fine judge. For Le Maître was not only a man of discrimination, he was fair-minded also, not at all envious, and no flatterer. He was so much the superior of all those country choirmasters, and they were so conscious of the fact themselves, that they looked on him rather as their chief than as their colleague.

After spending four or five days most agreeably at Belley, we departed and continued on our way without any accident except those I have just spoken of. When we reached Lyons we put up at Notre-Dame de Pitié; and while we waited for the box which, thanks to another lie, our good patron M. Reydelet had helped us to get on to a Rhône boat, M. le Maître went to see some acquaintances, among them Father Caton, a Franciscan, of whom more hereafter, and Abbé Dortan, Count de Lyon. Both received him kindly, but they betrayed him, as we shall see in a moment; he exhausted his good luck at M. Reydelet's.

Two days after our arrival at Lyons, as we were passing down a little street not far from our inn, Le Maître was overtaken by one of his fits, which was so violent that it quite terrified me. I shouted out, called for help, gave the name of his inn and begged that he should be

carried there. Then, whilst the crowd gathered and pressed round him, where he had fallen insensible and foaming in the middle of the street, that poor man was abandoned by the sole friend upon whom he might have counted. I seized a moment when no one was looking, dodged round the street corner and disappeared. Heaven be praised that I have finished this third disgraceful confession! If I had many more like it to make, I should abandon this work that I have begun.

Of all that I have related so far some record has remained in one or another of the places where I have lived. But what I have to tell in the book that follows is almost entirely unknown. These are the wildest extravagances of my life, and it is lucky that they ended in no worse a way than they did. But my head was tuned to the pitch of a strange instrument, and was out of its proper key. It recovered of itself, and then I gave up my follies, or rather I committed others more in keeping with my nature. This period of my youth is the one about which my ideas are the most confused. Hardly anything happened that sufficiently stirred my feelings for me to preserve a lively recollection of it; and it will be strange if, amongst so many comings and goings, amongst so many successive moves, I do not make some confusions of time and place. I am writing entirely from memory, without notes or materials to recall things to my mind. There are some events in my life that are as vivid as if they had just occurred. But there are gaps and blanks that I cannot fill except by means of a narrative as muddled as the memory I preserve of the events. I may therefore have made mistakes at times, and I may still make some over trifles, till I come to the days when I have more certain information concerning myself. But over anything that is really relevant to the subject I am certain of being exact and faithful, as I shall always endeavour to be in everything. That is something that can be counted on.

As soon as I had left M. le Maître my mind was made up, and I set off back to Annecy. Owing to the purpose and secrecy of our departure I had been greatly concerned for the success of our escape. This interest had occupied me entirely, and for some days diverted me from those thoughts which called me home. But once our safety left me calmer my dominant feeling recovered its hold. Nothing flattered me, nothing tempted me, I had no desire for anything except to return to Mamma. The faithful tenderness of my devotion to her had rid my head of all imaginative plans and all the follies of ambition. I could see no other happiness now except that of living beside her, and I did not go a step without feeling that I was moving away from

that happiness. I went back to her therefore as soon as it was possible. So speedy was my return and so distracted were my thoughts that though I remember all my other journeys with so much pleasure I have not the least recollection of this one, except of my departure from Lyons and my arrival at Annecy. I leave it to be imagined whether this last event ever could have escaped my memory. When I arrived I found Mme de Warens gone; she had left for Paris.

I have never learnt the real secret of that journey.* She would have told it to me, I am sure, if I had pressed her. But no man was ever less curious than I about his friends' secrets. My heart, being solely taken up with the present, is entirely filled with it and, except for past pleasures, which will henceforth be my only enjoyment, I have never a corner empty for that which is no more. All that I could guess from the little she told me is that in the revolution caused by the King of Sardinia's abdication† she was afraid of being forgotten and, with the assistance of the intriguing M. d'Aubonne, decided to look for a similar position with the French Court,‡ which she has often told me she would have preferred, since the press of important business prevents one from being so disagreeably and closely watched in Paris. If that is the truth, it is most surprising that she did not receive an unpleasant reception on her return and that she continued to draw her pension without any interruption. Many people have supposed that she was entrusted with some secret commission, either by the bishop, who had business at that time with the French Court and was obliged to go there himself, or by someone even more powerful, who knew how to ensure her a favourable reception on her return. One thing is certain, if that is the case; such an ambassadress was no bad choice. For she was still young and beautiful, and had all the talents needed to gain the advantage in any negotiations.

[* She was sent to Paris on a secret mission by the King of Sardinia.]

[† Victor Amadeus II abdicated in 1730.]

[‡ This hypothesis seems unlikely. Mme de Warens took good care to ingratiate herself with the new king of Sardinia, Charles-Emmanuel III.]

BOOK FOUR

1731-1732 I came and found her gone. Judge of my surprise and my grief. Not till then did my regret at my cowardly abandonment of M. le Maître begin to make itself felt. It became even keener when I learnt of the misfortune that had befallen him. His box of music, which contained his whole fortune, his precious box which had cost us such trouble to save, had been seized on his arrival in Lyons at the instance of Count Dortan, whom the Chapter had informed by letter of its furtive removal. In vain had Le Maître claimed his property, his means of livelihood, the labour of his whole life. The ownership of that box was at least a matter to be disputed at court; but there was no trial. The matter was decided on the spot by the law of the stronger, and so poor Le Maître lost the fruit of his talents, the work of his youth, and the resource of his old age.

The blow I received lacked nothing to render it overwhelming. But I was of an age when great griefs have little hold, and I soon invented consolations for myself. I reckoned shortly to have news of Mme de Warens, although I did not know her address, and she did not know that I had returned; and as for my desertion of M. le Maître, all things considered, I did not find it blameworthy. I had been useful to him in his escape, and that was the only service incumbent upon me. If I had stayed with him in France I should not have cured him of his complaint. I should not have saved his box. All I should have done would have been to double his expenses without being of any service to him. That is how I saw matters then; I see them differently to-day. It is not when one has just performed a wicked action that it tortures one. It is when one remembers it long afterwards; for the memory of it never disappears.

The only way in which I could get news of Mamma was to wait. For where could I look for her in Paris, and where find money for the journey? Nowhere was I more certain sooner or later to learn of her whereabouts than at Annecy. So I stayed there. But I behaved pretty badly. I did not call on the Bishop, who had looked after me, and might do so again. I had no longer my mistress to speak for me and I was afraid of being reprimanded for our flight. Still less did I go to

the seminary M. Gros was no longer there. I saw no one of my acquaintance. I should very much have liked to call on the Intendant's wife, but I had not the courage. I did much worse than this. I sought out M. Venture, to whom I had not even given a thought since my departure, despite my infatuation. I found him sparkling and fêted by the whole of Annecy; the ladies fought for him. His success completely turned my head. I saw no one at all except M. Venture, and he almost made me forget Mme de Warens. In order to have greater opportunities to profit from his example, I proposed to him that I should share his lodgings. He was living with a shoemaker, a pleasant clownish individual who, in his dialect, never called his wife anything but *sloven*, a name she sufficiently deserved. He had quarrels with her, which Venture was at some pains to prolong under the pretence of trying to make them up. In his cold voice and with his Provençal accent he made remarks that had the utmost effect; the scenes there were enough to make one laugh aloud. In this way the mornings went by almost unnoticed; at two o'clock or three we had something to eat. Then Venture went out to visit his friends, with whom he had supper, and I went off to walk alone, meditating upon his great virtues, admiring and envying his rare talents, and cursing my unlucky star for not summoning me to a happy life like his. Oh, how little I knew myself! My own life would have been a hundred times more attractive if I had been less stupid, and if I had known better how to enjoy it.

Mme de Warens had taken no one with her but Anet; she had left her maid Merceret, of whom I have already spoken, behind. I found her still occupying her mistress's room. Mlle Merceret was a little older than I, not a pretty girl but pleasant enough, a good creature from Fribourg with no malice about her, and in whom I never discovered any worse failing than being at times somewhat argumentative with her mistress. I went to see her often; she was an old acquaintance, and the sight of her reminded me of one still dearer to me, for whose sake I loved her. She had several women friends, among them a Mlle Giraud, a Genevese, who, for my sins, took it into her head to fancy me. She was always pressing Merceret to bring me to see her, and I let myself be brought, because I was rather fond of Merceret, and because there were other young people there whom I enjoyed meeting. As for Mlle Giraud, who tried all sorts of ways of attracting me, nothing could have increased the aversion I felt for her. When she thrust her dry snout into my face, all dirty with

snuff, I could scarcely refrain from spitting. But I kept my patience. Besides I enjoyed myself very much among all those girls; and either in order to make up to Mlle Giraud, or for my own sake, they all vied with one another in their attentions to me. I saw nothing but friendship in all this. I have thought since that it only depended on me to find something more in it. But that never occurred to me; never gave the subject a thought.

Besides, seamstresses, chambermaids, and shop girls hardly tempted me; I needed young ladies. Everyone has his fancies, and that has always been mine; it is a point on which my ideas differ from Horace's. However it is certainly not pride of rank or position that attracts me. It is a better preserved complexion, lovelier hands, greater elegance in jewellery, an air of cleanliness and refinement about a woman's whole person, better taste in her way of dressing and expressing herself, a finer and better made gown, a neater pair of shoes, ribbons, lace, better done hair. I should always prefer the less pretty woman of two if she had more of all that. I find this prejudice most absurd myself; but my heart dictates it, in spite of me.

Well, these advantages offered themselves once more, and it only depended on me to take advantage of them. How I love, from time to time, to come upon the pleasant moments of my youth! They were so sweet! They have been so brief, so rare, and I have enjoyed them at such slight cost! Ah, their mere memory still gives my heart a pure delight, which I need in order to restore my courage and to sustain the tedium of my remaining years.

The dawn seemed so beautiful to me one morning that I hastily dressed and hurried out into the country to see the sunrise. I relished this pleasure with all its charms; it was in the week after St John's Day.* The earth, in all its adornment, was thick with grasses and flowers; the nightingales, whose song was almost over, seemed to delight in warbling the louder; all the birds were paying their concerted farewells to Spring, and greeting the birth of a fine summer day, one of those lovely days that one sees no more at my age, and that have never been seen in the melancholy land† where I am now living.

I had, without perceiving it, gone some distance from the town; the heat was increasing, and I was walking in the shade, in a valley along a stream. I heard the sound of horses behind me, and the voice of girls, who seemed in difficulties, but were laughing heartily about

[* At the end of June.]

[† Rousseau was writing at Wooton, Staffordshire.]

them all the same. I turned round; I was called by my name. I went up and met two young persons of my acquaintance, Mlle de Graffenried and Mlle Galley, who, not being good horsewomen, were unable to make their mounts cross the stream. Mlle de Graffenried was a most charming young lady from Berne, who had been expelled from her country for some juvenile folly and had followed the example of Mme de Warens, at whose house I had sometimes seen her. But having, unlike Mamma, received no pension, she had been only too glad to attach herself to Mlle Galley, who had conceived a friendship for her and persuaded her mother to let her stay as her companion until she could be somehow provided for. Mlle Galley was a year younger than her friend, and even prettier. There was something more delicate, something more refined about her. Her figure was very small but at the same time very well developed – the age at which a girl is at her loveliest. These two had a great affection for one another, and they were both so good by nature that their friendship was certain to be of long duration unless some lover came to interrupt it. They told me that they were going to Toune,* an old castle belonging to Mme Galley, and begged for my help in getting their horses across, since they could not manage it themselves. I wanted to use the whip. But they were afraid that I might be kicked and they might be thrown. So I tried another method. I took Mlle Galley's horse by the bridle and, pulling it after me, crossed the stream with the water half way up my legs. The other horse made no difficulty about following. This done, I was on the point of taking leave of the ladies, and going off like a fool. They exchanged a few whispered words, however, and Mlle de Graffenried said to me: 'Oh no, not at all. You can't run away from us like that. You have got wet in our service, and we are in conscience bound to see that you get dry. You must come with us, if you please. You are our prisoner, under arrest.' My heart beat; I looked at Mlle Galley. 'Yes, yes,' she put in, laughing at my look of fright. 'Prisoner of war. Get up on the crupper behind her. We mean to render a good account of you.' 'But, Mademoiselle, I have not the honour of your mother's acquaintance. What will she say when she sees me?' 'Her mother,' replied Mlle de Graffenried, 'is not at Toune. We are on our own, and we are returning this evening. You will come back with us.'

No electric spark could be quicker than the effect her words had upon me. As I leapt on Mlle de Graffenried's horse I was trembling

[* Actually the Château de la Tour.]

with joy. And when I had to put my arms around her to keep on, my heart beat so fast that she noticed it and told me that hers was beating too out of fear of falling off. This, considering my position, was almost an invitation to verify the fact. But I did not dare, and all through the journey my two arms were like a belt around her, a very tight one it is true, but they did not stray for a moment. Some women who read this may feel like boxing my ears – and they would not be wrong.

The gaiety of the trip and the girls' chatter made me so talkative that right up till evening, all the time we were together, we were never quiet for a second. They had put me so completely at my ease that my tongue spoke as much as my eyes, though it did not say the same things. Only at occasional moments, when I was alone with one or the other of them, did the conversation become a little embarrassed. But the missing one came back so quickly as to leave no time for us to examine the reason for our discomfort.

When we reached Toune and I was thoroughly dried, we had lunch. Then it was necessary to proceed to the important matter of preparing dinner. The two young ladies left their cooking from time to time to kiss the farmer's children; and as the poor scullion watched them he champed at his bit. Provisions had been sent from the town, and there were all the ingredients for a very good dinner, dainties especially. But unfortunately the wine had been forgotten. This omission was not surprising, for these girls hardly drank any. But I was annoyed, for I had somewhat counted on its aid to embolden me. They were annoyed also, perhaps for the same reason, though I do not think so. Their bright and charming high spirits were innocence itself. And, besides, what use could I be to them, they being two? They sent all round the neighbourhood to look for some wine, but none was found, the peasants of this canton being both sober and poor. When they expressed their regret, I told them not to be too concerned, for they had no need to get wine in order to intoxicate me. That was the only compliment I had the courage to pay them all day. But I think the minxes saw well enough that it was not an empty one.

We dined in the farm, the two friends sitting on benches on either side of the long table and their guest between them on a three-legged stool. What a dinner! What a most charming memory! Why, when one can enjoy such pure and genuine pleasures so cheaply, must one try to find others? Never could a supper at any little place in Paris

compare with that meal. I do not mean only for its gaiety and its charm and joy; I mean also for its sensuous pleasure.

After our dinner we made an economy. Instead of taking the coffee which remained over from lunch we kept it for the afternoon to drink with the cream and cakes they had brought; and to keep up our appetites we went into the orchard to finish our dessert with cherries. I climbed a tree and threw them down bunches; and they returned me the stones up through the branches. Once Mlle Galley presented such a mark with her apron held out and her head back, and I aimed so well, that I dropped a bunch into her bosom. How we laughed! 'Why are not my lips cherries?' I said to myself. 'How gladly would I throw them there, for both of them, if they were!'

Thus we spent the day amusing ourselves at absolute liberty, but always with the utmost propriety. Not a single doubtful word, not a single risky joke; and we did not impose this restraint on ourselves in any way. It was there of its own accord. We took the tone our hearts dictated. My modesty – some might say my foolishness – was so intense, indeed, that the greatest freedom I allowed myself was once to kiss Mlle Galley's hand. It is true that the circumstances lent importance to this slight favour. We were alone. I found it difficult to breathe; her eyes were cast down and my mouth, instead of finding words, preferred to fasten on her hand, which she softly withdrew after receiving my kiss, at the same time giving me a look that showed no annoyance. I do not know what I might have said to her. But her friend came in, and at that moment seemed to me quite ugly.

Finally they remembered that they must not wait till night to return to the town. We had only just time enough to get back by daylight, and we hurriedly set off riding as we had come. If I had dared, I would have altered the arrangement, for Mlle Galley's glance had sharply stirred my feelings. But I dared not say anything, and it was not for her to make the suggestion. On our way we said it was a pity the day was over. But far from complaining that it had been short we declared that we had found the secret of making it long, thanks to all the amusements we had been able to fill it with.

I left them at almost the same spot where they had picked me up. How sorry we were to part! With what pleasure did we plan to meet again! Twelve hours spent together were as good as centuries of intimacy. The sweet memory of that day cost those charming girls nothing. The tender union which had prevailed between us three was quite as good as any livelier pleasures, and could not have subsisted

alongside them. We loved one another without secrecy or shame, and were ready to go on loving one another like that for ever. Innocence has its own delights which are as sweet as the other kind, since they have no intervals but continue unbroken. For my part, I know that the memory of a day as lovely as that touches me more, charms me more, and recurs to my heart more often than does the thought of any delights I have tasted in all my life. I did not exactly know what I wanted from those two charming girls, but they both attracted me exceedingly. I do not say that if I had been master of the situation, my heart would have been divided. I felt a slight preference. I should have been delighted to have Mlle de Graffenried for my mistress. But, could I have chosen, I should have preferred her as an intimate friend. However that may be, I felt as I left them that I could not live without them both. Who could have told that I should never see them again in all my life, and that there was the end of our ephemeral love?

Anyone reading this will not fail to laugh at my amorous adventures, and observe that after lengthy preliminaries the most advanced of them concluded with a kiss of the hand. Make no mistake, my readers. I probably had more pleasure from this affair which ended with a kiss of the hand than you will ever have from yours which, at the very least, begin there.

Venture, who had gone to bed very late the night before, returned shortly after me. On that occasion I had not the same pleasure in seeing him as usual, and I took care not to tell him how I had spent the day. The young ladies had spoken of him rather contemptuously, and had seemed to me displeased to learn I was in such bad hands. This did him harm in my eyes. Besides, anything that took my mind from them could not fail to be disagreeable. However, he soon brought me back to himself, and to myself, by talking to me of my situation. It was too critical to last long. Although I spent exceedingly little, my small purse was on the point of exhaustion. I had no resources. No news of Mamma. I did not know what to do, and I felt a cruel pang at my heart on seeing Mlle Galley's friend reduced to charity.

Venture said that he had spoken of me to the King's Justice,* and would take me to dine with him the next day; that he was a man in the position to assist me through his friends and, anyhow, a good acquaintance to make, an intelligent and learned person and very good company, who had talent himself and appreciated it in others.

* *Le Juge-mage*, who administered justice in the King's name.

When mixing, as usual, the utmost frivolities with matters of great importance, he showed me a pretty rhyme, fresh from Paris and set to an air from one of Mouret's operas which was then being played. This rhyme had so pleased M. Simon – which was the King's Justice's name – that he intended to compose another in reply and to the same air. He had also asked Venture to compose one, and Venture had the mad idea of making me compose yet a third, in order, as he said, that my rhymes might be seen arriving the next day like the sedan-chairs in Molière's *Roman comique*.

That night, being unable to sleep, I made the best rhyme I could. As the first verses I had ever made they were passable; better even, or at least composed in better taste, than they would have been the evening before, since the subject turned on a tender situation, to which my heart was now attuned. When I showed my rhymes to Venture in the morning he declared them neat and put them in his pocket, without telling me whether he had composed his. We went to dine at M. Simon's, and he welcomed us. The conversation was pleasant, as it could not fail to be between two intelligent men who had made use of their reading. For my part, I played my role, I listened and kept quiet. Neither of them mentioned the rhyme, and I did not either. So far as I know, mine was never discussed.

M. Simon appeared pleased with my bearing, which was about all he saw of me at that interview. He had seen me several times before at Mme de Warens's, without paying any great attention to me. So it was from that dinner that I can date my acquaintance with him, which was of no assistance to me in the matter for which I had made it, but from which I subsequently derived other advantages which cause me to remember him with pleasure.

I should be wrong to omit a description of his appearance. For, considering his capacities as a magistrate and the wit upon which he relied himself, no one could form the least idea of it were I to pass it over. My Lord Justice Simon was positively under three feet high. His legs were straight, thin, and even rather long, and they would have made him taller if they had been upright. But they were set at an angle like an extended pair of compasses. His body was not only short but thin, and inconceivably small in every respect. He must have looked like a grasshopper when he was naked. His head was of natural size, with well-formed features, a distinguished expression, and rather fine eyes. It looked like a false head set on a stump. He might have spared himself any outlay in adornment, for his great wit

clothed him from head to foot. He had two entirely different voices, which continually alternated in his conversation, making a contrast that was quite pleasant at first, but soon became most disagreeable. One was grave and sonorous; it was, if I may say so, the voice of his head. The other – clear, sharp, and piercing – was the voice of his body. When he listened to himself carefully, pronounced very deliberately and husbanded his breath, he could speak all the time with his deep voice. But if he got in the least excited and a livelier accent crept in, he sounded like someone whistling through a key, and had the utmost difficulty in recovering his bass.

With the appearance I have described, which is by no means overdrawn, M. Simon was well-mannered, a great payer of compliments, and almost dandyish in the attention he paid to his dress. As he desired to make the best of himself, he liked giving his morning audiences in bed. For no one seeing a fine head on the pillow was likely to imagine that there was nothing more. This sometimes gave rise to scenes which I am sure all Annecy remembers to this day.

One morning when he was waiting for litigants in – or rather upon – his bed, in a beautiful night cap of finest white linen decorated with two great knobs of rose-coloured ribbon, a peasant arrived and knocked at the door. The servant had gone out. My Lord Justice, hearing the knocks repeated, called ‘Come in.’ But his cry was a little too loud, and so came out in his shrill tone. The man entered and looked round to see where this woman’s voice came from and, seeing a woman’s mob cap and top-knot in the bed, was on the point of retiring, making profound apologies to the supposed lady. M. Simon became angry, which made him even shriller. The peasant confirmed in his belief and thinking himself insulted, replied with abuse, remarking that here seemingly was nothing but a prostitute and that the King’s Justice did not set much of an example in his own house. The King’s Justice was furious and, having no other weapon but his chamber-pot, was about to throw it at the poor man’s head when his housekeeper came in.

This little dwarf, so ill-used by Nature in the matter of his body had received compensation on the mental side. He had a naturally pretty wit and had been at pains to improve it. Although by all accounts he was a very fair lawyer, he had no love for his profession. He had devoted himself to literature with some success. He had acquired in particular that brilliant superficiality, that polish that lend

grace to all relationships, even to those with women. He knew by heart all sorts of little stories and sayings by famous persons, and possessed the art of making the most of them, relating dramatically and with an air of secrecy, as if they had happened only the day before, incidents which were quite sixty years old. He understood music, and sang pleasantly in his manly voice; in fact he had many pretty accomplishments for a magistrate. By dint of flattering the ladies of Annecy, he had made himself the fashion with them; they kept him dancing attendance like a little monkey. He even pretended to have made his conquests, and that amused them greatly. A certain Mme d'Épagny said that in his case the supreme favour was to kiss a woman on the knee.

As he was familiar with fine literature and enjoyed talking about it, his conversation was not only entertaining but instructive. Subsequently, when I had acquired a taste for reading, I cultivated his acquaintance, and gained great advantage from it. I sometimes went to see him from Chambéry, where I then was. He praised and encouraged my industry, and gave me good advice about my reading, by which I have often profited. Unfortunately in that puny body there dwelt a most sensitive soul. Some years later he had some unpleasant experience or other which grieved him deeply, and of which he died. It was sad, for he was certainly a good little man. One began by laughing at him, but ended by loving him. Although his life was only very slightly linked with mine, yet I received some useful lessons from him; and so I thought I might, out of gratitude, here dedicate a little memorial to him.

As soon as I was free I ran to Mlle Galley's street, fondly expecting to see someone go in or come out, or at least open a window. Nothing; not so much as a cat appeared; and all the time I was there the house remained as closed as if it had been uninhabited. The street was narrow and deserted; a man loitering would be noticed. From time to time someone passed – entering or leaving some neighbouring place. I was greatly embarrassed by my looks. I thought people would guess why I was there, and that idea was a torture to me. For I have always put the honour and quiet of those who were dear to me before my own pleasures.

Finally, wearied of playing the Spanish lover and having no guitar, I decided to go and write to Mlle de Graffenried. I should have preferred to write to her friend. But I did not dare, and it was proper to begin with the one to whom I owed the other's acquaintance, and

with whom I was the more intimate. When my letter was written I took it to Mlle Giraud, according to my arrangement with the young ladies when we parted. It was they who had suggested this expedient. Mlle Giraud was an upholstress, and since she worked sometimes at Mme Galley's she had the entry to the house. The messenger did not seem to me too well chosen, however. But I was afraid that if I were to make difficulties on this score, they would propose no one else. Besides, I dared not say that she was trying to work on her own account. I felt humiliated that she should dare to think of herself as of the same sex, in my eyes, as those young ladies. But, to be brief, I preferred her agency to none, and took my chance.

At my first word Mlle Giraud guessed my secret; it was not difficult. If a letter to be delivered to some young ladies did not speak for itself, my stupid and embarrassed expression would have given me away of itself. It can be imagined that this commission gave her no great pleasure to perform. She accepted it all the same, and carried it out faithfully. I ran to her house next morning and found my answer. How I hurried to be outside to read and kiss it at my leisure! That requires no telling. But what is more interesting is Mlle Giraud's behaviour, in which I found more refinement and reserve than I should have expected of her. Sensible enough to see that at the age of thirty-seven, with her pop-eyes, her snuff-stained nose, her shrill voice, and her discoloured skin, she stood no chance against two young ladies with all their graces and in the fine flower of their beauty, she decided neither to assist them nor to give them away, and preferred to lose me herself rather than get me for them.

1732 Mlle Merceret, having received no news of her mistress, had been thinking for some time of returning to Fribourg. Mlle Giraud finally made up her mind for her. She went further; she convinced her that it would be right for someone to take her back to her father, and she proposed me. The little Merceret, who did not dislike me either, thought this idea a very good one. They discussed it with me the same day as a matter already settled; and as I found nothing displeasing about this way of being arranged for, I agreed, regarding the journey as the matter of a week at most. Mlle Giraud, who thought otherwise, arranged everything. I had to confess the state of my finances. Provision was made for me. Merceret undertook to pay my expenses; and in order to retrench on the one hand what

it would cost her on the other, it was decided, at my entreaty, that her little luggage should be sent ahead, and that we should go on foot by small stages. And so we did.

I am sorry to show so many girls in love with me. But as I have no reason to boast of any advantages I derived from these affairs, I think that I can tell the truth without scruple. Merceret, being younger and less brazen than Mlle Giraud, never made me such lively advances. But she imitated my accent and my intonations, repeated my expressions, and paid me all the attention that I should have paid her. She always took care, since she was very timid, that we should sleep in the same room, an arrangement that rarely stops at that point in the case of a lad of twenty and a girl of twenty-five on a journey.

It did stop there on that occasion. Such was my simplicity that, although Merceret was not disagreeable to me, not only did the slightest temptation to gallantry not enter my head, but I did not so much as think of anything of the kind; and even if the idea had come to me I should have been too stupid to know how to take advantage of it. I could not imagine how a girl and a young man could ever manage to sleep together. I believed that such a frightening familiarity would require ages of preparation. If the poor Merceret expected some compensation for the money she was paying out for me, she was deceived. We arrived at Fribourg exactly as we had left Annecy.

I passed through Geneva without going to see anyone, but I almost felt faint as I crossed the bridges. Never have I seen the walls of that happy city, never have I entered it, without feeling a certain sinking of the heart, the product of an excess of emotion. The noble ideal of liberty exalted my spirit, while at the same time the thought of equality, unity, and gentleness of manners moved me to tears, and inspired me with a keen regret that I had lost all those blessings. How wrong I was, and yet how natural was my mistake! I imagined that I saw all this in my native land, because I carried it in my own heart.

We had to pass through Nyon. Pass through without seeing my good father! If I had had the courage to do that I should have died afterwards of sorrow. I left Merceret at the inn and took the chance of going to see him. Oh, how wrong I had been to be afraid of him! When I came his heart gave way to the paternal feelings that filled it.*

[* A letter from Rousseau to his father, written several months later, shows that the old man had more or less disowned him for becoming a Catholic. The interview must have been a stormier one than Jean-Jacques would here have us suppose.]

What tears we shed as we embraced! He thought at first that I had returned to him. I told him my story, and what I was resolved to do. He opposed my plans, but feebly. He explained the danger I was exposing myself to, and said that the briefest follies were the best. For the rest, he felt not the least temptation to hold me back by force, and in that I think he was right. But certainly he did not do all that he might have done to bring me back, perhaps because he himself considered that after taking the step I had taken I ought not to retract from it, or perhaps because he was at a loss to know what he could do with me at my age. I have learned since that he had formed a most unfair opinion of my travelling companion, and one very far from the truth, though natural enough. My stepmother, a good creature though a little smooth, made a pretence of wanting to keep me for supper. I did not accept, but said that I counted on stopping with them longer on my return, and I left my little bundle in their care, having had it sent on by the boat and finding it a nuisance. Next day I set out early in the morning, very glad that I had seen my father and had the courage to do my duty.

We arrived safely at Fribourg. Towards the end of our journey Mlle Merceret's attentions grew somewhat less. After our arrival she treated me with nothing but coldness, and her father, who was not rolling in riches, did not give me a very good welcome either. So I put up at the inn. When I went to see them next day they offered me dinner, and I accepted. We parted dry-eyed. I returned that evening to my beer-shop, and I set out two days after I had arrived, without much idea where I intended to go.

Here is another moment in my life when Providence offered me exactly what I needed in order to spend my days in happiness. Merceret was a very decent girl, not brilliant, not beautiful, but by no means plain either; not too lively, and very sensible except for occasional little tempers, which passed off in tears and never had any stormy results. She had a real affection for me, and I should have had no difficulty in marrying her and following her father's occupation.* My taste for music would have made me fond of it. I should have established myself at Fribourg, a little town which was not pretty, but inhabited by good people. I should no doubt have missed some great pleasures, but I should have lived in peace to my last hour. There was nothing to hesitate over in such a bargain, as I should know better than anyone else.

[* Perhaps that of a music master. M. Merceret was an organist.]

I returned not to Nyon but to Lausanne. I wanted to feast my eyes on that lovely lake, which one sees there at its widest. Most of the secret motives which have guided my decisions have been equally flimsy. Distant prospects have rarely strength enough to make me act. The uncertainty of the future has always made me look on long-distance projects as lures for fools. I indulge in hopes like anyone else, so long as it costs me nothing to keep them alive. But if they involve pain and trouble I am done with them. The smallest little pleasure that appears within my grasp tempts me more than the joys of paradise, except, however, such pleasures as are followed by pain, and they do not tempt me at all. For I only like unadulterated joys, and those one never has when one knows that one is laying up a store of repentance for oneself.

I was in sore need of arriving at some place or other, the nearer the better. For, having lost my way, I found myself at Moudon one evening where I spent the little I had left, except for ten *kreutzers*, which went next day on my dinner; and when I arrived the next evening at a village near Lausanne I went into the inn without a penny to pay for my bed or any idea what to do. I was extremely hungry. So I put a good face on the matter and called for supper, as if I had the money to pay for it. Then I went up to bed without a thought, and slept peacefully; and when I had breakfasted next morning and reckoned up with the landlord, I offered to leave him my coat as a pledge for the seven *batz* which was the amount of my bill. The good fellow refused, saying that, Heaven be praised, he had never stripped anyone, and that he did not intend to begin now for seven *batz*. He told me to keep my coat and pay him when I could. I was touched by his kindness, but less touched than I should have been, and less so than I have been since when I have thought of this incident again. It was not long before I sent him his money by a trustworthy man, together with my thanks. But fifteen years later, passing through Lausanne on my way back from Italy I found with genuine regret that I had forgotten the name of the inn and the landlord. I should have gone to see him. It would have been a real pleasure to me to remind him of his good deed, and to show him that his kindness had not been misplaced. Services no doubt more important, but rendered with greater ostentation, have seemed to me less worthy of gratitude than that honest man's simple and unpretentious humanity.

As I drew near to Lausanne, I reflected upon the straits that I was in, and on some way of extricating myself without going to display my

distress to my stepmother. And I compared myself, on my pedestrian pilgrimage, with Venture arriving at Annecy. I was so fired by this idea that without thinking that I had neither his charm nor his talents I took it into my head to play the little Venture at Lausanne, to teach music, of which I was ignorant, and to say that I came from Paris, where I had never been. As there was no choir school there at which I could deputize and, anyhow, I must take good care not to venture among professional musicians, I began on the execution of my fine plan by inquiring for a small inn which was both cheap and comfortable. I was recommended to a certain Perrotet who took in boarders. This Perrotet turned out to be the best fellow in the world, and gave me a very hearty welcome. I told him my little lies in the form that I had composed them. He promised to speak for me, and to try to get me some pupils, saying that he would not ask me for any money till I had earned some. His charge for board was five silver crowns; which was not a great price, but a great deal for me. He advised me only to take half-board at first, which consisted of a good soup and nothing else for dinner, but a good supper in the evening. I agreed. Poor Perrotet let me have all this on credit with the best will in the world, and spared no pains to be of use to me.

Why is it that, having found so many good people in my youth, I find so few in my latter years? Has the race died out? I am forced to look for them to-day in a different class from the one I found them in then. Among the people, where great passions only express themselves occasionally, natural feeling makes itself heard more often. In the highest ranks of all it is absolutely stifled, and beneath a mask of feeling it is always self-interest or vanity that speaks.

From Lausanne I wrote to my father, who sent me my bundle, and also some excellent advice, of which I ought to have made better use. I have already noted certain moments of incomprehensible delirium in which I was not myself. Here is another extreme instance. In order to realize the extent to which I had lost my head, the degree to which I had, so to speak, *venturized* myself, it is only necessary to see how many extravagant actions I piled one on the other. Here I was a singing master who could not read a tune. For even if I had profited by the six months I spent with Le Maître, they would never have been sufficient. Besides, I had been taught by a master; and that was enough to make me learn badly. Being a Parisian from Geneva, and a Catholic in a Protestant country, I decided that I had better change my name as well as my religion and my country. I always imitated

my great model as closely as I could. He had called himself Venture de Villeneuve. So from the name Rousseau I made the anagram Vaussore, and called myself Vaussore de Villeneuve. Venture knew how to compose although he had never said anything about it; I knew nothing about it and boasted of my skill to everybody; and although I could not score the simplest drinking song, I claimed to be a composer. That is not all. Having been introduced to M. de Freytorens, professor of law, who was a music-lover and held concerts at his house, I decided to give him a sample of my talents, and began to compose a piece for his concert with as much boldness as if I had known how to set about it. I had the persistence to work for a fortnight on this fine composition, to make a fair copy of it, write out the parts, and distribute them with as much assurance as if they had been a musical masterpiece. Finally – a fact that will be hard to believe, though it is really true – to crown this sublime production in a fitting manner, I tacked on a pretty minuet, which was sung in all the streets, and which people may still remember, scored for the once well-known words:

What a caprice!
 What an injustice!
 Can your Clarissa
 Have blabbed of your love! etc.*

Venture had taught me this air with its bass accompaniment, with different and obscene words by the aid of which I had remembered it. So I tacked this minuet with its bass on to the end of my composition, suppressing the words, and claimed it as my own with as much confidence as if I were addressing the inhabitants of the moon.

The players assembled to perform my piece. I explained to each the method of timing, the manner of interpretation and the cues for repeats. I made myself extremely busy. The five or six minutes spent in tuning up were five or six centuries to me. At last all was ready, I gave five or six premonitory taps on my conductor's desk with a handsome roll of paper. Attention! All was quiet. Gravely I began to beat time. They began. No, throughout all the history of French opera never was there heard such a discordant row. Whatever they might have thought of my pretended talents, the effect was worse

* Quel caprice!
 Quelle injustice!
 Quoi! ta Clarice
 Trahiroit tes feux! etc.

than anything they seem to have expected. The musicians were choking with laughter; the audience goggled their eyes, and would gladly have stopped their ears; but they had not the means. My wretched orchestra, who were out to amuse themselves, scraped loudly enough to pierce a deaf man's ear-drums. I had the audacity to go right on, sweating big drops, it is true, but kept there by shame. I had not the courage to bolt and make my escape. For my consolation, I heard the audience around me whisper into one another's ears, or rather into mine: 'It's absolutely unbearable'; or 'What crazy music!'; or 'What a devil of a din!' Poor Jean-Jacques, at that cruel moment you could hardly expect that one day your music would excite murmurs of surprise and applause, when played before the King of France and all his Court, and that in all the boxes around the most charming ladies would say half aloud: 'What delightful sounds! What enchanting music! Every one of those airs goes straight to the heart!'

But what put everyone in a good humour was the minuet. No sooner had they played a few bars than I heard peals of laughter from all sides. Everyone congratulated me on my pretty ear for a tune, and assured me that my minuet would earn me a name. They said that I deserved to have it sung everywhere. I have no need to depict my anguish, nor to confess that I deserved it.

Next day one of my orchestra, Lutold by name, came to see me, and was decent enough to congratulate me on my success. A deep sense of my foolishness, shame, regret, despair at the condition to which I was reduced, and the impossibility of keeping my heart closed in my great distress, made me open it to him. I gave way to my tears, and instead of being content to admit my ignorance to him I told him everything, begging him to keep my secret, which he promised to do. The manner in which he kept it anyone may imagine. That same evening all Lausanne knew who I was; and, what is remarkable, no one showed me that he did, not even my good Perrotet, who, notwithstanding, did not give up lodging and feeding me.

I went on living, but in a melancholy way. The consequences of such a beginning did not make Lausanne a very agreeable place for me to stay in. Pupils did not present themselves in swarms; not a single girl to teach, and no one from the town. I had in all two or three fat 'Deutsche', whose stupidity matched my ignorance, who bored me to tears, and who, in my hands, became no great performers. I was summoned to only one house, where a little snake of a

girl amused herself by showing me a lot of music of which I could not read a note, and which she had the malice to sing afterwards in front of the music master, to show him how it should be done. I was so little able to read an air at first sight that at that brilliant concert of which I have spoken I was not able to follow the score even for a minute, to find out whether they were really playing the music I had under my eyes and which I had myself composed.

In the midst of all these humiliations, I found the sweetest of consolation in the news I had from time to time of my two delightful girl friends. I have always found great powers of consolation in the sex, and nothing so lightens my afflictions in misfortune as to feel that some charming creature is concerned for me. This correspondence, however, ended shortly afterwards; but the fault was mine. When I moved on I neglected to give them my address and, being compelled by necessity to think continually of myself, I soon forgot them completely.

It is a long time since I have mentioned my poor Mamma. But it would be a grave mistake to suppose that I had forgotten her. I did not cease to think of her and to long to find her again, not only because I needed her for my subsistence but because my heart needed her even more. My attachment to her, lively and tender though it was, did not prevent my loving other women – but not in the same way. All alike owed my affection to their charms. But whereas in others their charms were its sole cause, and my affection would not have outlived them, Mamma could have become old and plain without my loving her any less tenderly. My heart had fully transferred to her person the homage it had at first paid to her beauty; and whatever changes she were to undergo, provided that she remained herself my feelings could not change. I am well aware that I owed her a debt of gratitude. But really I did not think of that. Whatever she had done for or not done for me, it would still have been the same. I loved her neither out of duty, nor out of interest, nor for motives of convenience. I loved her because I was born to love her. When I fell in love with any other woman it made a distraction, I admit, and I thought of Mamma less often; but I thought of her with the same pleasure, and never, whether I was in love or not, never did I turn my mind to her without thinking that there could be no happiness in life for me so long as I was separated from her.

Though I had heard nothing from her for so long, I never believed that I had entirely lost her, or that she could have forgotten me. 'She

will learn sooner or later that I am wandering,' I said to myself, 'and will show me some sign of life; I shall find her again, I am certain.' In the meantime it was a delight to me to live in her native country, to walk in the streets through which she had walked, past houses in which she had lived. Yet all this was guesswork. For one of my queer stupidities was that I lacked the courage to inquire about her, or pronounce her name except in case of absolute necessity. It seemed to me that in mentioning her I revealed all that she inspired in me, that my lips betrayed the secret of my heart, and that I compromised her in some way. I think also that mingled with these ideas was some fear that people would speak ill of her. There had been a good deal of talk about the steps she had taken, and some about her general behaviour. So for fear that something might be said that I did not wish to hear, I preferred that she should not be mentioned at all.

As my pupils did not occupy much of my time, and as the town of her birth was only twelve miles from Lausanne, I made a two or three days' trip there on foot, during which time I remained in a state of most pleasant emotion. The view of the Lake of Geneva and its lovely shores had always a particular attraction in my eyes, which I cannot explain and which does not depend only on the beauty of the sight, but on something more compelling which moves and stimulates me. Every time I visit the Canton of Vaud, I experience an impression composed of memories of Mme de Warens, who was born there, of my father, who lived there, of Mlle de Vulson who reaped the first fruits of my love, of several expeditions I made in my childhood and of some from another source still more secret and still more powerful than all those. When a burning desire for that mild and happy existence which eludes me and for which I was born, comes to fire my imagination, it is always associated with the Canton of Vaud, with its lake shores and its lovely countryside. I cannot live without an orchard on the shores of that lake, and no other; I must have a constant friend, a charming wife, a cow, and a little boat. I shall not enjoy perfect happiness upon earth until I have all these. I am amused by the simplicity with which I have gone several times to that country solely to seek that imaginary happiness. Each time I have been surprised to find its inhabitants, particularly its women, of an entirely different character from that which I had expected. What an anomaly this seemed to me! The country and the people who inhabit it have never seemed to me to have been made for one another.

On this trip to Vevay, walking along that lovely shore, I gave

myself up to the sweetest of melancholy. My heart darted eagerly after a thousand innocent delights. I indulged my feelings. I sighed and cried like a child. How often I would stop to weep at my leisure and, sitting on a large stone, would be amused to see my tears fall into the water!

On arriving at Vevay I put up at 'The Key', and in the two days that I spent there without seeing anyone I took a liking to the town, which has remained with me on all my journeys, and which finally caused me to make the characters of my novel live there. I would say to all those possessed of taste and feeling: 'Go to Vevay, explore the countryside, examine the scenery, walk beside the lake, and say whether Nature did not make this lovely land for a Julie, a Claire, and a Saint-Preux. But do not look for them there.' I return to my history.

As I was a Catholic and professed myself one, I did not hesitate openly to follow the faith I had embraced. On Sundays when it was fine, I went to mass at Assens, six miles from Lausanne. I usually made this journey with other Catholics, particularly with an embroiderer from Paris whose name I have forgotten. He was not a Parisian of my sort, but a true Parisian from Paris, God's own arch-Parisian, as good-natured as a man from Champagne. So strong was his love of his city that he never chose to suspect I was not his fellow-citizen, for fear of losing this chance of talking about Paris. M. de Crouzas, the lieutenant-governor, had a gardener who was also from that city. But he was not so good-natured, and considered the honour of his birthplace compromised by anyone daring to claim it as his when he had not the right to. He questioned me with the air of a man certain of catching me out, and then smiled maliciously. Once he asked me what was remarkable about the Marché-Neuf. I answered at random, as may be expected. Now that I have lived twenty years in Paris I should know the city. But if I were asked a similar question to-day, I should be at no less of a loss for an answer. Indeed, my confusion might lead anyone to suppose that I had never been there, so prone is one to rely on deceptive arguments even when confronted with the truth.

I cannot tell exactly how long I stayed at Lausanne. I have not preserved any very striking recollections of that city. I only know that, finding no means of livelihood there, I went on to Neuchâtel, where I spent the winter. I did better in this latter town. I got some pupils and earned enough to settle with my good friend Perrotet, who had faithfully sent my modest luggage after me, although I was considerably in his debt.

Insensibly I learned music by teaching it. My life was pleasant

enough. A sensible man would have been content with it, but my restless heart demanded something different. On Sundays and other days when I was free, I roamed the country and the woods round about, always wandering, dreaming, and sighing; and once out of the city I did not return till evening. One day, being at Boudry, I went into an inn to dine, and saw there a man with a large beard, in a violet coat of the Greek style, and a fur cap. There was a certain nobility about his air and dress, and he often had difficulty in making himself understood, since he spoke only an almost unintelligible jargon, more like Italian than any other language. I understood nearly everything he said, and I was alone. He could only communicate by signs with the host and the country people. I said a few words to him in Italian, which he understood perfectly; whereupon he got up and came to embrace me with delight. The acquaintance was soon made, and from that moment I served him as interpreter. His dinner was good, mine was worse than middling. He invited me to take a share of his and I accepted without much ceremony. After drinking and chattering we managed to get to know one another, and by the end of the meal we were inseparable. He told me that he was a Greek priest and Archimandrite of Jerusalem, and that he had been commissioned to make a collection in Europe for the restoration of the Holy Sepulchre. He showed me some very fine letters-patent from the Tsarina and the Emperor; he had them from many other sovereigns as well. He was sufficiently pleased with what he had collected up to now. But he had had incredible difficulties in Germany, not understanding a word of German, Latin, or French, and being reduced to his Greek, Turkish, and *lingua franca*, as his sole resources, which had not procured him much in that country, where he had started off. He proposed that I should accompany him and serve as his secretary and interpreter. Although I had just bought a little violet coat, which was not unsuitable for my employment, I did not look well enough clad for him to think it would be difficult to secure my services, and he was not mistaken. Our agreement was quickly made; I asked for nothing and he promised a great deal. Without security or bond, or knowing anything about him, I submitted myself to his direction, and next day there I was on the way to Jerusalem!

We began our tour with the Canton of Fribourg, where he did not do very well. His episcopal dignity did not permit him to act as a beggar and collect money from private persons. We presented his

commission to the Senate, who gave him a small sum. From Fribourg we went to Berne, where we stayed at 'The Falcon', then a good inn where one found good company. There were many guests at the table, and they were well served. For a long time I had been living poorly, and badly needed to replenish my strength. Now I had the opportunity and I took advantage of it. My lord Archimandrite was himself a convivial man, who liked to entertain. He was gay and spoke well for those who understood him, being not without knowledge of certain subjects and using his Greek erudition with considerable skill. One day when he was cracking nuts at dessert he cut his finger very deeply; and as the wound bled copiously he showed it to the company, saying: 'Mirate, signori; questo è sangue Pelasgo'.*

At Berne my services were of some use to him, and I did not acquit myself so badly as I had feared. I was a good deal bolder and more eloquent than I should have been on my own behalf. Things were not done here with the same simplicity as at Fribourg; it required long and frequent conferences with the chief men of the State, and the examination of his papers was not the work of a day. In the end, everything being in order, he was admitted to an audience with the senate. I went in with him, as his interpreter, and I was told to speak. That was the last thing I had expected. It had never occurred to me that after long conferences with the individual members it would be necessary to address the assembled body as if nothing had been said. Judge of my embarrassment! For one so shy, to speak not only in public, but before the senate of Berne, and to speak impromptu, without a single minute in which to prepare myself, was enough to have put an end to me. Yet I did not even feel intimidated. Briefly and clearly I explained the Archimandrite's commission. I praised the piety of those princes who had contributed to the collection he had come to make and, to spur their Excellencies' emulation, I said that no less was to be expected of their accustomed munificence. Then, in an endeavour to prove that this good work was equally meritorious to all Christians irrespective of sect, I concluded by promising the blessings of Heaven to all who should take part in it. I will not say that my speech made an impression. But it was certainly liked, and on leaving the chamber the Archimandrite received a very considerable donation and, in addition, some compliments on the intelligence of his secretary, which I had the agreeable task of translating, but which I did not venture to render word for word. That is the only time in

* 'Gaze, gentlemen; this is Pelasgian blood.'

my life that I have spoken in public and before a ruling body, and perhaps the only time too that I have spoken boldly and well. What a difference there is between different moods in the same man! Three years ago, when visiting my old friend M. Roguin at Yverdun, I received a deputation to thank me for several books I had given to the library of that town. The Swiss are great speechifiers; and these gentlemen harangued me. I felt obliged to reply. But in my reply I got so confused and my thoughts became so muddled that I dried up and made myself ridiculous. Though naturally timid, I have sometimes been bold in my youth, but never in my later years. The more I have seen of the world, the less able have I been to conform to its manners.

After leaving Berne, we went to Soleure. For the Archimandrite's plan was to make his way back to Germany, and return by way of Hungary or Poland, which entailed an immense journey. But as his purse filled rather than emptied on the road, he had little to fear from a roundabout way. As for me, I enjoyed travelling on horseback almost as much as on foot, and I could not have asked for anything better than to go on like this for the whole of my life. But it was decreed that I should stop short of that.

The first thing we did on arriving at Soleure was to go and pay our respects to the French ambassador. Unfortunately for my bishop, this ambassador was the Marquis de Bonac, who had been ambassador to the Porte, and who consequently must have been conversant with everything concerning the Holy Sepulchre. The Archimandrite had a quarter of an hour's audience, to which I was not admitted, since the ambassador understood *lingua franca* and spoke Italian at least as well as I. When my Greek went out, I was about to follow him, but I was detained; it was my turn next. Having given myself out as a Parisian, I was, as such, under His Excellency's jurisdiction. He asked me who I was, and exhorted me to tell him the truth. Having promised to do so, I asked him for a private audience, which was granted me. The ambassador led me into his study, and shut the door. I threw myself at his feet, and kept my word. I should not have said less even if I had made no promise, for a continuous need to pour myself out brings my heart at every moment to my lips; and after having confessed unreservedly to the musician Lutold I had no reason to be mysterious with the Marquis de Bonac. He was so pleased with my little story, and with the emotion with which he saw I had told it, that he took me by the hand, led me to his wife, and introduced me to her, giving

er a short version of my tale. Mme de Bonac received me kindly, and said that they must not let me go with that Greek monk. It was decided that I should stay at the embassy, while they saw what they could make of me.* I wanted to go and say good-bye to my poor Archimandrite, for whom I had conceived an affection, but I was not allowed. They sent to tell him that I had been detained, and a quarter of an hour later I saw my little bundle arrive. M. de la Martinière, secretary to the embassy, was, in a manner, put in charge of me. As he led me to the room that had been chosen for me, he said: 'This room was occupied in the Count du Luc's time by a well-known man† with the same name as yourself. It is up to you to fill his place in every respect, so that people shall speak one day of Rousseau the first and Rousseau the second.' The realization of his wish, of which I had then little hope, would have flattered my ambition less if I had been able to foresee what a price I should one day have to pay for it.

What M. de la Martinière had told me excited my curiosity. I read the works of the writer whose room I occupied and, concluding from the compliment which had been paid me that I had a talent for poetry, I composed as a first trial a cantata in praise of Mme de Bonac. This fancy did not last long. I have occasionally written mediocre verses; this is a fairly good exercise for training oneself in elegant turns of phrase, and for teaching one to write better prose. But I have never found sufficient attraction in French poetry to give myself over to it altogether.

M. de la Martinière wanted to see how I could write, and asked me to put down on paper the account of myself that I had given to the ambassador. I wrote him a long letter which I hear has been preserved by M. de Marianne, who was for a long time attached to the Marquis de Bonac, and who afterwards succeeded M. de la Martinière, when M. de Courteilles was ambassador. I have begged M. de Malesherbes to try and procure me a copy of that letter. If I can get hold of it, through him or anyone else, it will be found in the collection which I mean to append to my confessions.

The experience that I was beginning to acquire was gradually moderating my romantic plans. For instance, not only did I not fall in love with Mme de Bonac, but I felt from the beginning that I could not gain any great advancement in her husband's service. With

[* At this point Rousseau wrote to his father exposing the sad state of his affairs. It seems therefore that the ambassador did nothing for him immediately.]

[† Jean-Baptiste Rousseau (1671-1741) the lyrical poet.]

M. de la Martinière in office, and M. de Marianne, so to speak, next in succession, I was left hopes of no better fortune than an under-secretaryship, which did not tempt me inordinately. Therefore, when consulted as to what I should like to do, I displayed a great desire to go to Paris. The ambassador approved of the idea, which at least seemed likely to take me off his hands. M. de Merveilleux, secretary and interpreter to the embassy, said that his friend M. Godard, a Swiss colonel in the French service, was looking for a companion for his nephew, who was entering the service at a very early age, and that he thought I might be suitable. With this idea, which was quite casually adopted, my departure was settled on and, seeing a journey in prospect with Paris as its goal, I was beside myself with delight. Having received some letters of introduction, and a hundred francs for my travelling expenses, together with some excellent advice, I departed.

I spent a fortnight on this trip, which I count among the happy days of my life. I was young and in good health; I had enough money and plenty of hopes; I was travelling on foot, and travelling alone. The reader might be surprised to find me reckoning this such an advantage, if he had not grown used to my peculiarities by now. My pleasing fantasies kept me company, and never did the heat of my imagination produce grander ones than then. If I was offered a vacant place in a coach or someone addressed me on the road, I frowned to see the overthrow of my fortunes, whose edifice I had been erecting as I walked. This time I had military ideas. I was going to attach myself to a soldier, and to become a soldier myself; for it had been arranged that I should start as a cadet. I imagined myself already in an officer's uniform with a fine white plume. My heart swelled at this noble thought. I had a smattering of geometry and the art of fortification; I had an uncle a military engineer; I had been, in a manner, born into the ranks. My short-sightedness offered a slight obstacle, but that did not worry me. I reckoned by coolness and daring to supply the defect. I had read that Marshal Schomberg was very short-sighted. Why should not Marshal Rousseau be so too? I became so excited by this nonsense that I saw nothing but troops, ramparts, gabions, batteries, and myself, in the midst of fire and smoke, quietly giving my orders, with my field-glasses in my hand. However, when I passed through pleasant country, when I looked on groves and streams, the moving sight made me sigh regretfully. In the midst of my glory I felt that my heart was not made for such a noise; and soon

without knowing how, I found myself once more amidst my beloved sheepfolds, renouncing the works of Mars for ever.

How greatly did my first sight of Paris belie the idea I had formed of it! The exterior decoration that I had seen at Turin, the beauty of the streets, the symmetry and alignment of the houses, had led me to expect something even finer in Paris. I had imagined a city of a most imposing appearance, as beautiful as it was large, where nothing was to be seen but splendid streets and palaces of marble or gold. As I entered through the Faubourg Saint-Marceau, I saw nothing but dirty, stinking little streets, ugly black houses, a general air of squalor and poverty, beggars, carters, menders of clothes, sellers of herb-drinks and old hats. All this so affected me at the outset that all the real magnificence I have since seen in Paris has not been sufficient to efface my first impression, and I have always retained a secret aversion against living in the capital. I may say that all the time I did, subsequently, reside there was entirely devoted to seeking means which would enable me to live elsewhere. Such is the fruit of an over-lively imagination, which exaggerates beyond the common measure and always sees more than it is told to expect. I had heard such praise of Paris that I had imagined it like ancient Babylon, which, had I visited it, I should no doubt have found falling equally short of the picture I had formed of it. The same thing happened to me at the opera, which I hastened to visit on the day after my arrival; the same thing happened to me later at Versailles; and later still when I saw the sea; and the same thing will always happen to me when I see sights of which I have heard too much. For it is impossible for men, and difficult for Nature herself, to surpass the riches of my imagination.

Judging from the way I was received by everyone to whom I had letters, I believed my fortune made. The man to whom I was most highly recommended and who made least fuss of me was M. de Surbeck, who had retired from the service, and was living in philosophical retirement at Bagneux, where I went several times to visit him, and where he never offered me so much as a glass of water. I received a warmer welcome from Mme de Merveilleux, the interpreter's sister-in-law, and from his nephew, a guards officer. Not only did this mother and son receive me kindly, but they gave me a standing invitation to their table, of which I often took advantage during my stay in Paris. Mme de Merveilleux seemed to me once to have been beautiful. Her hair was a lovely black, and she wore it in ringlets on her temples, in the old style. She retained a quality which does not

perish with personal charms, a very pleasant wit. She seemed to relish mine, and did all she could to be of assistance to me. But no one helped her, and I was soon disillusioned about all this great interest people had seemed to be taking in me. One must be fair to the French, however; they do not pour themselves out in protestations to the extent that they are said to, and those they make are nearly always sincere. But they have a way of appearing to be interested in one that is more deceptive than speeches. The coarse compliments of the Swiss can only impose upon fools. The manners of the French are more captivating for the reason that they are simpler. One might suppose that they are not telling you all that they will do for you, in order to give you a more pleasant surprise. I will go further. They are not false in their professions. They are naturally obliging, kindly, and benevolent and, whatever may be said, really more sincere than those of any other nation. But they are fickle and flighty. The feelings they profess for you are quite genuine, but those feelings go as they come. When they are talking to you they are full of you. Once you are out of their sight, you are out of their mind. Nothing remains permanently in their heads; with them everything is the affair of a moment.

So I was greatly flattered, but received little assistance. This Colonel Godard, to whose nephew I had been consigned, proved to be a frightful old miser. When he had seen my distress he had tried to get me for nothing, although he was rolling in money. He intended me to be a sort of unpaid valet to his nephew rather than a real tutor. As I was permanently attached to him and thereby excused from military duties, I had to live on my cadet's allowance, that is to say on a soldier's pay. He would hardly agree to give me a uniform; he would have liked me to content myself with that of the regiment. Mme de Merveilleux was indignant at his proposals, and herself persuaded me to refuse them; her son was of the same mind. There was an attempt to find me something else, but nothing was found. Meanwhile I began to be pressed for money; the hundred francs on which I had made my journey could not carry me very far. Fortunately I received in addition a small remittance from the ambassador, which served me in good stead. I think that if I had had more patience he would not have abandoned me. But languishing, waiting, and soliciting are absolute impossibilities to me. I lost heart; I paid no more calls, and all was over. I had not forgotten my poor Mamma. But how was I to find her? Where was I to look for her? Mme de Merveilleux, who knew my story, had helped me in my inquiries,

and for a long time without success. Finally she informed me that Mme de Warens had left the city more than two months ago,* but that it was not known whether she had gone to Savoy or Turin, and that some people said she had returned to Switzerland. This was quite enough to decide me that I would follow her. For I was sure that, wherever she was, I should find her more easily in the country than I had been able to do in Paris.

Before my departure I tried out my new poetic talent in an epistle to Colonel Godard, in which I ridiculed him in my best style. I showed this scrawl to Mme de Merveilleux, who instead of rebuking me, as she might have done, laughed heartily at my sarcasms, as did her son who, I think, had no love for M. Godard; and it must be admitted that the colonel was not a likeable man. I was tempted to send him my verses, and they encouraged me to do so. I made a parcel of them addressed to him and, as there was no city post in Paris at that time, put them in my pocket and sent them to him from Auxerre as I passed through. I still laugh sometimes to think of the ugly face he must have made on reading this panegyric in which he was drawn to the life. It began like this:

You thought, old sinner, some attack of madness
Might make me long to educate your nephew.†

This little piece – a poor enough composition indeed, but not devoid of wit and showing some talent for satire – is, nevertheless, the only satirical production that has ever issued from my pen. I have too little hatred in my composition to exploit such a talent. But I think it may be concluded from some polemical writing that I have done from time to time in my own defence that if I had been of a combative disposition, my assailants would not often have had the laugh on their side.

In thinking over the details of my life which are lost to my memory, what I most regret is that I did not keep diaries of my travels. Never did I think so much, exist so vividly, and experience so much, never have I been so much myself – if I may use that expression – as in the journeys I have taken alone and on foot. There is something about

[* This is towards the end of 1731, and Mme de Warens had actually left Paris in the summer of 1730.]

† Tu croyois, vieux pénard, qu'une folle manie
D'élever ton neveu m'inspireroit l'envie.

walking which stimulates and enlivens my thoughts. When I stay in one place I can hardly think at all; my body has to be on the move to set my mind going. The sight of the countryside, the succession of pleasant views, the open air, a sound appetite, and the good health I gain by walking, the easy atmosphere of an inn, the absence of everything that makes me feel my dependence, of everything that recalls me to my situation – all these serve to free my spirit, to lend a greater boldness to my thinking, to throw me, so to speak, into the vastness of things, so that I can combine them, select them, and make them mine as I will, without fear or restraint. I dispose of all Nature as its master. My heart, as it strays from one object to another, unites and identifies itself with those which soothe it, wraps itself in pleasant imaginings, and grows drunk on feelings of delight. If, in order to hold them, I amuse myself by describing them to myself, what vigorous brush-strokes, what freshness of colour, what energy of expression I bring to them! All this, I am told, people have found in my works, although they have been written in my declining years. Oh, if only they had seen those of my early youth, those I sketched during my travels, those I composed but never wrote down! Why do I not write them, you will ask. But why should I? I reply. Why rob myself of the present charm of their enjoyment, to tell others that I enjoyed them once? What did readers matter to me, or a public, or the whole world, while I was soaring in the skies? Besides, did I carry paper with me, or pens? If I had thought of all that, nothing would have come to me. I did not foresee that I should have ideas. They arrive when they please, not when it suits me. Either they do not come at all, or they come in a swarm, overwhelming me with their strength and their numbers. Ten volumes a day would not have been enough. How could I have found time to write them? When I arrived, my only thought was for a good dinner. When I set out, I thought only of a good walk. I felt that a fresh paradise was waiting for me at the inn door. I thought only of going out to find it.

Never did I feel all this so clearly as on that journey back of which I am speaking. On my way to Paris I had confined myself to ideas of what I should do there. I had rushed into the career that lay before me and should have pursued it with sufficient honour. But that career was not the one to which my heart called me, and real beings did violence to my imaginary ones. Colonel Godard and his nephew sorted ill with a hero like myself. Heaven be praised, I was now delivered from all these obstacles. I could enter as deeply as I would into the land of

fantasy, which was the only one before me. I strayed so far into it, in fact, that several times I actually lost my way. But I should have been very reluctant to take a more direct route since, foreseeing that I should come to earth again at Lyons, I wished that I might never get there.

One day, in particular, having made a deliberate detour in order to get a closer view of a spot which seemed to me worth seeing, I was taken with it and went round it so often that in the end I lost myself entirely. After several hours of purposeless walking, dying of hunger and thirst, I entered a peasant's cottage, which did not look so fine but was the only dwelling I could see in the locality. I thought it would be as in Geneva or in Switzerland, where any well-to-do inhabitant is in a state to offer hospitality. So I begged this man to give me some dinner, for which I would pay. He offered me some skimmed milk and coarse barley bread, and said he had nothing else. I drank that milk with delight and ate that bread, husks and all. But they were not very invigorating fare for a man dropping with fatigue. The peasant watched me closely and judged the truth of my story by my appetite. Suddenly he said that he could see I was an honest young man* who had not come there as a paid spy. Then he opened a trap-door beside his kitchen, went down some stairs and returned after a minute with a nice brown wheaten loaf, a ham, which was most tempting although considerably cut into, and a bottle of wine, the sight of which rejoiced my heart more than all the rest. To this was added a fairly substantial omelette, and I made a dinner such as no one but a walker ever enjoyed. When it came to paying, his alarm and uneasiness returned. He would not take my money, and refused it in a strangely perturbed way. And the funny thing was that I could not imagine what he was frightened of. At last he tremblingly pronounced the terrible words 'excisemen' and 'cellar rats'. He gave me no understanding that he hid his wine on account of the excise and his bread on account of the duty, and that he would be a lost man if they suspected for a moment that he was not dying of hunger. All that he said to me on this subject, which was entirely strange to me, made an impression on me which will never grow dim. It was the germ of that inextinguishable hatred which afterwards grew in my heart against the oppression to which the unhappy people are subject, and against their oppressors. That man, although in easy circumstances,

* Apparently I had not yet acquired the expression I have since been given in my portraits.

dared not eat the bread he had earned by the sweat of his brow, and could only evade ruin by displaying the same misery which prevailed all around him. I came out of his cottage equally touched and indignant, deploring the fate of those lovely lands on which Nature has only lavished her gifts to make them the prey of barbarous tax-farmers.

That is the only really distinct memory that remains to me of all that happened to me during that walk. I remember only one thing more, that as I drew near to Lyons I was tempted to prolong my journey in order to visit the banks of the Lignon. For among the novels that I had read with my father, *Astraea* had not been forgotten; it was the one that recurred most frequently to my mind. I inquired for the road to Forez; and when talking with the landlady of an inn, I learned that it was a good country for a workman to turn to, for there were a great number of forges, and good iron work was done there. This recommendation at once cooled my romantic curiosity, for it seemed out of place to go and look for Dianas and Sylvanders among a population of blacksmiths. The good woman who encouraged me in that way had no doubt taken me for an apprentice locksmith.

I did not go to Lyons entirely without an object. On my arrival I went to the Chasottes to see Mme de Warens's friend Mlle du Châtelet, to whom she had given me a letter when I came there with M. le Maître. So she was an old acquaintance. That lady informed me that her friend had, in fact, passed through Lyons, but she did not know if she had gone on as far as Piedmont. Mme de Warens had been uncertain herself when she left whether she would not make a stop in Savoy. Mlle du Châtelet offered to write for news of her, if I wished, and suggested that the best thing I could do would be to wait at Lyons till it came. I accepted her offer. But I had not the courage to tell her that I was in a real hurry for the reply, and that my small depleted purse left me in no condition to wait for long. What held me back was not any coolness in her reception; on the contrary she had made a great fuss of me, and treated me on a footing of equality. This, indeed, had deprived me of the courage to reveal my state to her, and thus descend from the role of an entertaining companion to that of a miserable beggar.

I think I have a fairly clear view of the sequence of events which I have described in this book. Yet I seem to recollect another Lyons journey, during this same period, which I cannot place, and during

which I found myself in dire straits. One little anecdote, rather difficult to relate, will prevent my ever forgetting it. I was sitting one evening in Bellecour after a very poor supper, wondering how to get out of my trouble when a man in a cap came and sat down beside me. He had the appearance of one of those silk weavers who are called *effeta* men in Lyons. He spoke to me, and I replied. We had talked a bare quarter of an hour when, with the same coolness and no change in his tone, he suggested that we should have some fun together. I waited for him to explain what this fun was to be, but without another word he made ready to give me a practical illustration. We were almost touching, and the night was not so dark as to prevent my seeing what practice he was preparing for. He had no designs on my person; at least nothing suggested that intention, and the situation would have been against it. All that he wanted, as he had said, was to have his fun and for me to have mine, each on his own account; and this seemed to him so natural that it had not even occurred to him that it might not seem the same to me. I was so alarmed at his beastliness that I did not reply, but got up precipitately and ran off as fast as I could go, imagining that the wretch was at my heels. So concerned was I that instead of making for my lodgings down the Rue Saint-Dominique, I ran in the direction of the river-bank, and did not stop till I was over the wooden bridge, trembling as if I had just committed a crime. I was addicted to the vice myself, but the memory of this incident cured me of it for some time.

On that very journey I had an adventure of almost the same kind, but one which exposed me to greater danger. Conscious that my funds were nearly exhausted, I husbanded the miserable sum that still remained. I took meals less often at my inn, and soon I took none there at all, being able to satisfy myself as well for five or six *sous* at a tavern as I did there for my twenty-five. As I no longer dined in the place, I did not feel justified in sleeping there, not that I owed very much to my landlady, but I was ashamed to occupy a room and allow her to make no profit. The weather was fine, and one evening when it was very hot I decided to sleep out in the public square. I had already settled down on a bench when a priest, who was passing and saw me lying there, came over and asked me if I had nowhere to stay. He confessed my plight, and he seemed touched by it. He sat down beside me, and we talked. His conversation was pleasant, and from what he said I conceived the highest possible opinion of him. When he saw that he had put me at my ease he remarked that he had no vast

lodging, in fact only a single room, but that he certainly would not leave me to sleep there in the public square. It was too late now, he said, for me to find a bed, but he offered me, for that night, the half of his. I accepted his proposal, for I had already hopes that I had made a friend who might be useful to me. We set off. He struck a light. His room seemed to me clean, though very small, and he did me the honours most courteously. He took some cherries steeped in brandy out of a glass jar, and we ate two each before going to bed.

This man had the same vice as my Jew at the hospice, but he did not display it so brutally. It may have been because he knew that I should be heard and was therefore afraid to force me to defend myself; it may have been that he was really less determined in his designs; but whatever the reason, he did not venture to propose what he wanted openly but tried to excite me without alarming me. Less ignorant than on the previous occasion, I quickly realized his purpose, and shuddered. Not knowing in what sort of house or in whose hands I was, I was afraid that if I made a noise I might pay for it with my life. I pretended not to know what he wanted, but by showing that I much disliked his attentions and was determined to put up with no more of them, I succeeded in compelling him to control himself. Then I spoke to him as mildly and firmly as I was able; and without showing him that I suspected anything, excused my display of alarm by recounting my former adventure in language that deliberately betrayed my disgust and horror, so much so that I think he felt nauseated himself. He certainly abandoned his filthy designs entirely, and we spent the rest of the night in peace. He even gave me some good and sensible advice, for he certainly was not a man without intelligence, though he was a wicked one.

In the morning, not wishing to appear put out, the priest spoke of breakfast, and asked one of his landlady's daughters, who was a pretty girl, to send some to him. She answered that she had no time. Then he turned to her sister, who did not vouchsafe him a reply. We continued to wait; no breakfast came. Finally we went into the young ladies' room. They received him with very little cordiality, and I had even less reason to congratulate myself on my reception. The elder, turning round, stepped on my toe with her pointed heel, on a spot where a painful corn had compelled me to cut a hole in my shoe; and her sister quickly pulled a chair from under me just as I was about to take a seat; while their mother splashed my face as she threw some water out of the window. Wherever I sat down they made me move

so that they could look for something; never in my life had I been entertained like that. In their insulting and mocking looks, I could see smothered fury, but I was so stupid as not in the least to understand the reason. Astounded, stupefied, and ready to believe that they were all possessed, I was beginning to get thoroughly frightened when the priest, who pretended neither to see nor hear anything, realized that there was no prospect of breakfast, and decided to leave the house. I hastened to follow him, very glad to escape from those three furies. On our walk he proposed that we should go and breakfast at a café. Although I was extremely hungry I did not accept his offer, nor did he press me very hard to do so, and we parted company at the third or fourth turning. I was delighted to see the last of everything connected with that accursed house, and he was just as glad, I believe, to have brought me so far from it that it would not be easy for me to find it again. Neither in Paris nor in any other town has any such adventure ever befallen me. Indeed, I have preserved a very unfavourable impression of the people of Lyons, and have always regarded that city as the centre of the most frightful corruption in all Europe.

The memory of the extremities to which I was there reduced does not help either to give me pleasant memories of Lyons. If I had been made like anyone else and possessed the art of borrowing and incurring a debt at my inn, I should easily have got out of my troubles. But for such practices my ineptitude was equal to my repugnance; and to convey the extent of them both, it is enough to say that although I have spent almost all my life in poor circumstances, and have often been almost entirely without food, never once have I been asked for money by a creditor that I have not given it to him on the very instant. I have never been capable of running up minor debts; and I have always preferred to suffer rather than to owe.

It was a real hardship to be reduced to spending the night in the street, and that happened to me several times at Lyons. I preferred to spend the few *sous* that remained to me on bread rather than on a bed, for after all I was less likely to die of sleeplessness than of hunger. The astonishing thing is that in my cruel condition I was neither worried nor depressed. I had not the least concern for the future, and I waited for the reply that Mlle du Châtelet was sure to receive, sleeping in the open air, either on the ground or on a bench, as peacefully as on a bed of roses. I even remember spending one delightful night outside the town, on a road that ran beside the Rhône or the Saône – I cannot remember which. On the other side of this road were some gardens

built up on a terrace. The day had been very hot. The evening was most pleasant, and the dew was falling on the parched grass. There was no wind, the night was still, and the air was fresh without being cold. The sunken sun had left red wisps of vapour in the sky, and their reflection stained the water a rosy red. The trees on the terrace were full of nightingales which answered one another's song. I moved in a kind of ecstasy, surrendering my senses and my heart to the enjoyment of it all, and only occasionally sighing with regret that I was enjoying all this alone. Deep in my sweet reverie, I walked on late into the night without noticing that I was tired. I was aware of it at last, and lay down voluptuously upon the step of a kind of niche or false door let into the terrace wall. The canopy of my bed was formed by the tops of the trees. One nightingale was perched exactly above me, and sang me to sleep. My sleep was sweet and my awaking sweeter still. It was broad day; and as my eyes opened I saw the water, the greenery, and a lovely countryside. I got up and shook myself. I felt the pangs of hunger, and walked cheerfully towards the city, determined to spend the two small coins I still had left on a good breakfast. I was in such fine spirits that I sang the whole way; and I even remember what I sang. It was one of Batistin's cantatas, called 'At the Baths of Thomery'* which I knew by heart. Blessings on good old Batistin and his excellent cantata, which brought me a better breakfast than I had reckoned on, and a still better dinner, on which I had not reckoned at all. I was walking splendidly and singing my very best when I heard someone behind me. I turned round, and saw an Antonine† monk following me, who seemed to be listening to me with enjoyment. He caught me up, greeted me and asked if I had any knowledge of music. I replied 'A little', meaning to convey 'A great deal'. He continued to question me, and I told him a part of my history. He asked me if I had ever copied music. I replied, 'Often'. And that was true, for my best way of learning was by copying. 'Well,' he said, 'come with me. I can give you some days' work, and during that time you will lack for nothing so long as you are willing to be confined to your room.' I agreed most readily, and followed him.

His name was M. Rolichon. He was very fond of music, had great knowledge of it, and sang in little concerts which he used to give with his friends. This was all innocent and sensible enough. But his hobby

* *Les Bains de Thomery.*

† The Antonines were a community of secularized monks.

had apparently degenerated into a mania, which he was obliged in part to conceal. He took me to a little room, which was to be mine, and where I found a great deal of music which he had copied. He gave me more to be transcribed and, among it, the cantata that I had been singing, which he was to sing himself in a few days' time. I spent three or four days there copying all the time that I was not eating, for I had never been so famished nor better fed in my life. He brought my meals himself from their kitchen, and it must have been a good one if their ordinary fare was as rich as the meals they gave me. Never in my life did I enjoy my food so much; I must confess too that all this tasty fare came to me at a most opportune moment, for I was really almost starved. I worked with almost as good a will as I ate, and that is saying something. It is true that my accuracy was not as great as my industry. Several days afterwards, when I met M. Rolichon in the street, he told me that my scores had made the music unplayable, so that were they of omissions, duplications, and transpositions. I cannot deny that when I later chose music-copying as my profession I chose the one trade in all the world for which I was least suited. Not that I did not write the notes well or did not copy very neatly. But the tediousness of a long job causes my mind so to wander that I spend more time scratching out than writing, and if I do not take the greatest care in comparing the parts, they always produce mistakes in the performance. So, though I meant to do well, I worked very badly, and in an endeavour to be quick I went all wrong. This did not prevent M. Rolichon from treating me well till the last, and from giving me an extra crown, which I did not deserve, when I left: a sum which put me entirely on my feet again. For, a few days later, I received news from Mamma, who was at Chambéry, and money to go and join her, which I was delighted to do. Since those days my finances have often been low, but never so low that I have had to do without food. I think of that time with gratitude in my heart for the care which Providence took of me. It was the last time in my life when I suffered from hunger and want.

I spent another seven or eight days at Lyons, waiting for Mlle du Châtelet to perform some commissions for Mamma, during which time I visited her more constantly than before – and enjoyed several conversations with her on the subject of her friend – since now I was no longer distracted by painful thoughts about my situation, nor compelled to conceal it. Mlle du Châtelet was neither young nor pretty, but she had charm. She was gracious and friendly, and her

friendliness was the more valuable because of her intelligence. She had that liking for moral observations which leads to the study of character; and it was from her, originally, that I derived that taste myself. She was fond of Lesage's novels, and especially of *Gil Blas*, about which she talked to me, and which she lent me. I enjoyed it, but I was not yet ripe for that sort of reading; I wanted novels of high-flown sentiment. So I spent my time at Mlle du Châtelet's grille* with equal pleasure and profit. For there is no doubt that interesting and sensible conversation with a good woman is more capable of forming a young man's mind than all the pedantic philosophy in books. At the Chasottes I made the acquaintance of some of the other boarders and their friends, among whom was a young lady of fourteen by the name of Mlle Serre, to whom I did not pay much attention at that time, but with whom I fell violently in love eight or nine years later, and with good reason, for she was a charming girl.

Full of expectations of soon seeing my dear Mamma again, I gave my imagination something of a rest, since the real happiness in store for me relieved me from the necessity of having to seek it in dreams. Not only was I to see her again, but near her and through her agency to resume a pleasant way of life as well. For she had found me, so she informed me, an occupation which she hoped would suit me, and which would not take me away from her. I exhausted every possible conjecture as to the nature of this occupation, and it would have taken the gift of prophecy for me to guess right. I had sufficient money to travel in comfort, and Mlle du Châtelet wanted me to hire a horse. I refused, and I was right to do so, since I should have forfeited the pleasure of my last real walk in all my life. For I cannot think of the frequent expeditions I made in the neighbourhood of Motiers, while I lived there, as worthy of that name.

It is a very strange thing that my imagination never works more delightfully than when my situation is the reverse of delightful, and that, on the other hand, it is never less cheerful than when all is cheerful around me. My poor head can never submit itself to facts. It cannot beautify; it must create. It can depict real objects only more or less as they are, reserving its embellishments for the things of the imagination. If I want to describe the spring it must be in winter; if I want to describe a fine landscape I must be within doors; and as I have said a hundred times, if ever I were confined in the Bastille, there

[* Mlle du Châtelet would appear to have been a member of some secularized order.]

would draw the picture of liberty. On leaving Lyons I could see none but agreeable prospects; I was as cheerful – and I had cause to be – as I had been the reverse when I set out from Paris. During this journey, however, I enjoyed none of those delicious day-dreams that had accompanied me on my last trip. My heart was light, and that was all. I felt some emotion as I drew nearer to my excellent friend whom I was now to see again. I enjoyed some foretaste of the pleasure of being in her company, but I was not beside myself. I had always expected this; it was as if nothing new had happened. I felt a little anxious about my future employment, as if that had been a matter for much anxiety. My thoughts were calm and peaceful; they were not heavenly or ecstatic. Objects caught my eye. I observed the different landscapes I passed through. I noticed the trees, the houses, and the streams. I deliberated at cross-roads. I was afraid of getting lost, but I did not lose myself even once. In a word, I was no longer in the clouds. Sometimes I was where I was, sometimes already at my destination, but I never did I soar off into the distance.

In telling the story of my travels, as in travelling itself, I never knew how to stop. My heart throbbed with joy as I drew near to my dear Mamma, but I did not go any the quicker for that. I like to walk at my leisure, and halt when I please. The wandering life is what I like. To journey on foot, unhurried, in fine weather and in fine country, and to have something pleasant to look forward to at my goal, that is of all ways of life the one that suits me best. It is already clear what I mean by fine country. Never does a plain, however beautiful it may be, seem so in my eyes. I need torrents, rocks, firs, dark woods, mountains, steep roads to climb or descend, abysses beside me to make me afraid. I had these pleasures, and I relished them to the full, as I came near to Chambéry. At a place called Chailles, not far from a precipitous mountain wall called the Pas de l'Échelle, there runs boiling through hideous gulfs below the high road – which is cut into the rock – a little river which would appear to have spent thousands of centuries excavating its bed. The road has been edged with a parapet to prevent accidents, and so I was able to gaze into the depths and make myself as giddy as I pleased. For the amusing thing about my taste for precipitous places is that they make my head spin; and I am very fond of this giddy feeling so long as I am in safety. Supporting myself firmly on the parapet, I craned forward and stayed there for hours on end, glancing every now and then at the foam and the blue water, whose roaring came to me amidst the screams of the

ravens and birds of prey which flew from rock to rock and from bush to bush, a hundred fathoms below me. At those spots where the slope was fairly smooth, and the bushes thin enough to allow of stones bouncing through, I collected some of the biggest I could carry from a little way off and piled them up on the parapet. Then I threw them down, one after another, and enjoyed watching them roll, rebound, and shiver into a thousand pieces before they reached the bottom of the abyss.

Nearer to Chambéry, I saw a similar sight, though from an opposite angle. The road passes the foot of the finest waterfall I have seen in all my life. The mountain is so sheer that the water springs away and falls in an arc wide enough for a man to walk between the falls and the rock-face, sometimes without getting damp. But unless one is careful one can easily make a mistake, as I did. For, because of its immense height, the water breaks and falls in a spray; and if one goes a little too near without at first noticing that one is getting wet, one is soaked in a moment.

Finally I arrived, and saw her. She was not alone. The Intendant General was with her at the time I came in. Without a word, she took me by the hand and introduced me to him with that graciousness that opened all hearts to her: 'Here he is, sir, the poor young man. If you will only protect him for so long as he deserves, I shall have no further anxiety about him for the rest of his life.' Then, turning to me, she said: 'My child, you are in the King's service. Thank Monsieur l'Intendant. He offers you a livelihood.' I opened my eyes wide but said nothing, having no idea what to think. My budding ambition was within an inch of turning my head; already I saw myself a young Intendant. My fortune proved less brilliant than such preliminaries made me imagine. But, for the present, I had enough to live on, and that for me was plenty. This was how things stood.

Judging by the issue of the wars and by the condition of his ancient patrimony that one day it would slip from his hands, King Victor Amadeus* had done his best to exhaust it prematurely. A few years before, having resolved to tax the nobility, he had ordered a general land register of the whole country so that the tax might be distributed the more fairly when it was imposed. This task which he had begun was completed by his son. Two or three hundred men, some of them surveyors who were called geometricians, and some of them writers, whom they called secretaries, were employed on this project, and it

[* Who had abdicated in 1730, in favour of his son Charles-Emmanuel III.]

in the latter class that Mamma had found me a post. The place, without being very lucrative, gave me enough to live in comfort, in that country. The trouble was that the employment was only temporary. But it put me in the position to wait and look round, and Mamma had deliberately gone out to gain me the Intendant's special protection, so that I might be transferred to some more stable employment when this job was finished.

I took up my duties a few days after my arrival. There was nothing difficult about the work, and I soon became familiar with it. So it was that after four or five years of vagabondage, follies, and hardships, I began to make an honest living for the first time since I left Geneva. These long details of my early youth may well seem extremely childish, and I am sorry for it. Although in certain respects I have been a man since birth, I was for a long time, and still am, a child in many others. I never promised to present the public with a great personage. I promised to depict myself as I am; and to know me in my latter years, it is necessary to have known me well in my youth. As objects generally make less impression on me than does the memory of them, and as all my ideas take pictorial form, the first features to engrave themselves on my mind have remained there, and such as have subsequently imprinted themselves have combined with these rather than obliterated them. There is a certain sequence of impressions and ideas which modify those that follow them, and it is necessary to know the original set before passing any judgements. I endeavour in all cases to explain the prime causes, in order to convey the interrelation of results. I should like in some way to make my soul transparent to the reader's eye, and for that purpose I am trying to present from all points of view, to show it in all lights, and to contrive that none of its movements shall escape his notice, so that he may judge for himself of the principle which has produced them.

If I made myself responsible for the result and said to him, 'Such is my character', he might suppose, if not that I am deceiving him, at least that I am deceiving myself. But by relating to him in simple detail all that has happened to me, all that I have done, all that I have felt, I cannot lead him into error, unless wilfully; and even if I wish so, I shall not easily succeed by this method. His task is to assemble these elements and to assess the being who is made up of them. The summing-up must be his, and if he comes to wrong conclusions, the fault will be of his own making. But, with this in view, it is not enough for my story to be truthful, it must be detailed as well. It is

not for me to judge of the relative importance of events; I must relate them all, and leave the selection to him. That is the task to which I have devoted myself up to this point with all my courage, and I shall not relax in the sequel. But memories of middle age are always less sharp than those of early youth. So I have begun by making the best possible use of the former. If the latter come back to me in the same strength, impatient readers will perhaps be bored, but I shall not be displeased with my labours. I have only one thing to fear in this enterprise; not that I may say too much or tell untruths, but that I may not tell everything and may conceal the truth.

BOOK FIVE

1732-1738 It was, I think, in 1732* that I arrived at Chambéry, in the way that I have described, and started my employment as a surveyor in the King's service. I was more than twenty, almost twenty-one. I was fairly well formed for my age on the intellectual side, but my judgement was hardly shaped, and I sorely needed the instruction of those into whose hands I fell, in the art of correct behaviour. For some years of experience had not yet radically cured me of my romantic visions, and notwithstanding all my sufferings I knew as little of the world and mankind as if I had not already paid dearly for lessons.

I lived at home, that is to say at Mamma's; but not in such a room as at Annecy. No more garden, or stream, or country view. The house she lived in was dark and melancholy, and my room was the darkest and most melancholy in the whole house. A wall for view, a dead alley instead of a street, little air, little light, little space, crickets, rats, and rotten boards; all this made no pleasant habitation. But I was in Mamma's house, close beside her. Continuously at my desk or in my room, I did not notice the ugliness of mine; I had not time to think of it. It will seem strange that she had settled at Chambéry for the express purpose of living in this ugly house. That was a stroke of cleverness on her part that I must not pass over in silence. She very much disliked the idea of going to Turin, being conscious that after the recent revolutions and in the disturbed state of the Court this was not the moment to present herself. Her affairs, however, required her to put in an appearance. She was afraid that she might be forgotten or slandered, especially as she knew that the Count de Saint-Laurent, Intendant General of Finances, did not view her with favour. He owned an old, badly built house at Chambéry, so poorly situated that it always remained empty. This she rented and moved into. The plan succeeded better than a journey to Turin. Her pension was not withdrawn, and from that time onward the Count de Saint-Laurent was always one of her friends.

I found her household constituted more or less as before, and her

[* Probably at the end of the year.]

faithful Claude Anet still with her. He was, as I think I have said, a peasant from Moutru, who in his youth used to gather herbs in the Jura to make Swiss tea. She had taken him into her service on account of his skill in drugs, finding it convenient to have a herbalist as her lackey. He had such a passion for the study of plants, and she so encouraged his interest, that he became a true botanist and, if he had not died young, would have made as good a name as a scientist as he deserved for being an honest man. Since he was serious, even solemn, and I was younger than he, he became a sort of guardian to me, and kept me from many stupidities. For he inspired me with respect, and I did not venture to forget myself in front of him. He had the same effect upon his mistress, for she knew his good sense, his uprightness, and his devotion to her, and returned the last in kind. Claude Anet was undoubtedly a rare man, and the only one of his kind I have ever met. Slow, sedate, thoughtful, circumspect in his behaviour, cold in his manner, laconic and sententious in his conversation, he was in his passions the prey to an impetuosity which he never showed, though it consumed him inwardly, and which had caused him to commit only one foolish act in his life, but that a terrible one; he had taken a dose of poison. This tragic business occurred shortly after my arrival, and without it I should never have known of this servant's intimacy with his mistress. For if she had not told me of it herself I should never have suspected it. Assuredly, if devotion, zeal, and fidelity can deserve such a reward, he had earned it, and he certainly proved himself worthy of it, for he never abused it. They seldom had disputes, and made them up when they did. But there was one quarrel which did not end amicably. His mistress made an insulting remark that he could not swallow. He took counsel with his despair and, finding a bottle of laudanum at hand, swallowed it. Then he went quickly to bed, expecting never to wake again. Fortunately Mme de Warens was disturbed and excited herself, and while wandering through the house found the empty bottle and guessed the rest. With a shriek she rushed to his assistance, and her noise brought me to the scene. She confessed, begged me to help her, and, with great difficulty, managed to make him bring up the opium. As I witnessed this scene, I marvelled at my stupidity in not having in the least suspected the relationship which she now told me of. But Claude Anet was so circumspect that sharper eyes than mine might have been deceived. Their reconciliation was such that I was deeply affected myself; and from that time onwards I respected him as well as esteeming him, and

became in some sense his pupil; nor was I the worse for his instruction. It gave me some pain to learn that someone lived in even greater intimacy with her than I did. I had not even dreamed of desiring his place for myself; but I very naturally found it hard to see it filled by another. But instead of taking a dislike for the man who had stolen it from me I actually felt the affection I had for her extending to him. Above all, I wanted her to be happy, and since she needed him in order to be so, I was glad that he was happy too. For his part, he completely shared his mistress's views, and conceived a sincere friendship for the friend she had chosen. Without assuming the authority over me to which his position entitled him, he naturally exercised the superiority which his intelligence gave him over mine. I dared not do anything of which he seemed to disapprove, and he only disapproved of what was wrong. So we lived in an alliance which brought us all happiness, and which only death was strong enough to dissolve. One of the proofs of that delightful woman's excellent character is that all who loved her loved one another. Jealousy, and even rivalry, gave place to the dominant feeling which she inspired, and I have never known any one of those around her ill-disposed towards any other. Let my readers pause in their reading for a moment at this tribute, and if on reflection they can find any other man of whom they can say the same, let them attach themselves to him if they would live in peace – even if in other ways her morals are the worst.

Here begins a period of eight or nine years, between my arrival at Chambéry and my departure for Paris in 1741, during which time I shall have few events to describe, because my life was as simple as it was pleasant. And this uniformity was just what I needed most to complete the formation of my character, which continual troubles had prevented from taking firm shape. It is during this precious period that my miscellaneous and insequent education achieved some consistency and made me what I have never ceased to be amidst all the storms that awaited me. My progress was insensible and slow, and marked by few memorable events. Nevertheless it deserves to be followed and described.

At the beginning I hardly had any occupation except my work; the cares of the office did not allow me to think of anything else. The little free time I had I spent with my dear Mamma, and having no leisure to read I did not feel any inclination to do so. But when my duties had become a kind of routine, and occupied my thoughts less,

they began to become restless once more. Reading was again a necessity to me. This passion always seemed to grow more acute when it was most difficult to yield to it, and it might have become as overwhelming then as during my apprenticeship if other inclinations had not interfered and made a diversion.

Although our calculations did not require any very marvellous arithmetic, they sometimes demanded enough to cause me trouble. To get over my difficulties I bought some arithmetic books, and learned the subject well, for I learned it alone. Practical arithmetic entails more than one might think, if one aims at complete accuracy. There are computations of extraordinary length in the midst of which I have sometimes seen good geometricians go wrong. Reflection and practice together clarify one's ideas, and one finds shortened methods, the invention of which flatters one's self-esteem, and the accuracy of which satisfies one's mind; these make a pleasure of a task thankless in itself. I applied myself to arithmetic so thoroughly that no problem soluble by figures alone gave me any difficulty; and now that all I have ever known fades day by day from my memory, this accomplishment still partially remains, even after thirty years of disuse. Only a few days ago, on a visit I made to Davenport, being present at an arithmetic lesson given to my host's children, I had the incredible pleasure of doing a most complicated sum without a mistake; and as I put down the figures I imagined myself still at Chambéry, in my happy days. But they were far, far away.

The colour-washing of our geometricians' maps also gave me a taste for drawing. I bought some colours, and started painting flowers and landscapes. It is sad that I have found very little talent in myself for this art. The inclination was always there right enough. I could have spent whole months with my crayons and pencils, without ever going out. This hobby became too attractive to me, and I had to be dragged away from it. It is always the same with any pursuit to which I begin to devote myself; it grows and becomes a passion, and soon I can see nothing else in the world but the amusement that occupies me. Age has not cured me of this weakness, nor has it even diminished it. And even as I write this, I have become infatuated, like any old scatter-brain, by yet one more new and useless pursuit,* which I know nothing about and which even those who have devoted themselves to it in their youth are compelled to abandon by the age at which I am trying to begin it.

[* Rousseau's new hobby was botany. See later.]

That was the time that would have been right for it. The opportunity was a good one, and I had some temptation to profit by it. The pleasure that I saw in Anet's eyes when he came back carrying new plants brought me two or three times almost to the point of going out to botanize with him. I am pretty sure that if once I had done so the idea would have captured me, and to-day I might, perhaps, have been a great botanist. For I know no study in the world so close to my natural tastes as that of plants, and the country life I have been leading for the last ten years has been nothing but one continual botanization, though without purpose or progress. But having no idea of botany at that time I had conceived a sort of contempt, even a disgust, for it; I looked on it as no better than a study for apothecaries. Mamma, who was very fond of it, carried it no further herself. She merely looked for the common plants she required for her medications. So botany, chemistry, and anatomy were confused in my mind under the name of medicine, and served only to furnish me with sarcastic jokes all day long, and to earn me an occasional box on the ears. Besides, a different pursuit, and one too much contrasted with it, was gradually engrossing me, and soon absorbed all others. I am speaking of music. I certainly must have been born for that art, for I began to love it in my childhood, and it is the only one I have loved constantly throughout my life. The astonishing thing is that an art for which I was born should, nevertheless, have cost me so much trouble to learn, and that my progress in it has been so slow that after a lifetime's practice I have never managed to sing accurately at sight. What made this pursuit particularly pleasant for me was that I could practise it with Mamma. Though otherwise so different in our tastes, we had in music a meeting-ground of which I loved to take advantage. She was not reluctant. I was at that time more or less as advanced as she, and at the second or third attempt we could read a tune. Sometimes when I saw her busy at her furnace I would say: 'Here is a charming duet, Mamma, which seems just the thing to give your drugs a smell of burning.' 'Oh, indeed,' she would reply, 'if you make me burn them, I'll make you eat them.' As we argued I would drag her to her clavichord. Then everything was forgotten; the extract of juniper or wormwood was burnt to a cinder, she smeared my face with it, and everything was delightful.

You can see that though I had little spare time I had many things to fill it with. But I had one amusement more, which was worth all the rest. We lived in such a stifling dungeon that we had to go into the

country sometimes to get some air. Anet persuaded Mamma to rent a garden in the suburbs, in which to grow plants. Attached to this garden was a pretty little summerhouse which was furnished in the regulation way: it contained a bed. We often went there to dine, and sometimes I slept there. Insensibly I grew attached to this little retreat; I brought some books there and many prints. I spent a good deal of my time decorating it, and preparing pleasant surprises there for Mamma when she came out walking. Sometimes I left her, to give myself over to her there and think of her with greater pleasure. This is another whim which I neither excuse nor explain, but to which I confess because that is how it was. I remember Mme de Luxembourg once telling me with a laugh about a man who left his mistress in order to write to her. I answered that I could easily have been that man, and I might have added that I sometimes was. I have never felt when with Mamma, however, that need to leave her in order to love her better. For when I was alone with her I was as much at my ease as when I was by myself, and that has never happened to me with any other person, man or woman, whatever the affection I have felt for them. But she was so often surrounded by people who were uncongenial to me that boredom and annoyance sent me to my refuge, where I had her as I wanted her and was in no fear that tiresome people might come and follow us there.

While I lived a life of sweet repose, divided between work, pleasure, and instruction, Europe was not so calm. France and the Emperor had just declared war on one another; the King of Sardinia had joined in the quarrel, and the French army was marching through Piedmont to invade the Milanese. One column passed through Chambéry, and amongst others the regiment of Champagne to whose colonel, the Duke de la Trémouille, I was presented. He made me a great number of promises, and I am quite sure that he has never thought of me since that day. Our little garden was right at the edge of the suburb through which the troops entered, so that I could enjoy the pleasure of seeing them pass to my heart's content; and I was as anxious for the success of this war as if I had myself great interests at stake. Up to that time it had never entered my head to think of public affairs; and I started to read the newspapers for the first time, but with so much partiality on the side of the French that my heart pounded with joy at their smallest successes, and their reverses distressed me as much as if I had suffered them myself. If this folly had only been a passing one I should not consider it worth mentioning, but it gained so deep a

not in my heart, for no reason, that when afterwards, in Paris, I was playing the anti-despot and proud Republican, I unwillingly felt a secret partiality for that same nation which I adjudged servile, and even for their government which I set out to condemn. The funny part of it was that, being ashamed of a prejudice so contrary to my principles, I dared not confess it to anyone, and jeered at the French in their defeats while my heart bled for them more than did their own. I am surely the only man who has lived with a people who treated him well and whom he adored, and yet has assumed a pretence of scorn for them to their faces. Indeed, this predilection of mine has been so disinterested, so strong, so constant, and so invincible that even since I have left the kingdom, even since its government, magistrates and writers have vied with one another in attacking me, and since it has become good form to shower slanders and abuse upon me, I have been unable to cure myself of my folly. I love the French in spite of myself, and although they ill use me.

I have for a long time sought the reason for this partiality, and I have never been able to find it anywhere except in the occasion that gave it birth. A growing taste for literature made me love French books, the authors of those books, and the country of those authors. At the very moment when the French army was marching past my eyes, I was reading Brantôme's *Great Captains*. I had my head full of the Clissons and Bayards, the Lautrecs and Colignys, the Montmorencys and La Trémouilles, and felt an affection for their descendants as the heirs of their virtue and their courage. In every regiment that passed I seemed to see again those famous black bands which had once performed such deeds in Piedmont. In fact I applied to what I saw the ideas I drew from my books. My continuous reading, always confined to French authors, nurtured my affection for France, and finally transformed it into so blind a passion that nothing has been able to conquer it. I have since had occasion to observe in my travels that this feeling is not peculiar to me, and that by influencing more or less in all countries that part of the nation which loves reading and cultivates literature, it acts as a counter-weight to the general hatred which the French incur by their conceited manners. Their novels rather than the men themselves win the hearts of the women in all lands; and their dramatic masterpieces win the young people's affection for their theatres. The fame of the Paris stage attracts crowds of foreigners who return home enthusiastic. In short, the excellence and good taste of their literature wins the minds of all those who

have any; and in the unfortunate war from which they have just emerged I have seen their authors and philosophers supporting the glory of the French name, which their soldiers have tarnished.

So I was an ardent Frenchman, and that made me a collector of news. I stood with a crowd of gapers waiting in the square for the arrival of the couriers; and, even stupider than the ass in the fable, I was greatly concerned to know what master's saddle I should have the honour of wearing. For it was declared at that time that we were to belong to France; Savoy was to be exchanged for the Milanese. I must admit, however, that I had some cause for fear. For if that war had gone badly for the allies Mamma's pension would have been in great danger. But I was full of confidence in my good friends; and this time, despite M. de Broglie's surprise, this confidence was not deceived—thanks to the King of Sardinia, whom I had never thought of.

While there was fighting in Italy there was singing in France. Rameau's operas began to excite notice, and called attention to his theoretical works, the obscurity of which put them out of the reach of all but the few. I heard by chance of his *Treatise on Harmony*, and I knew no rest until I had acquired the book. By another chance I fell ill with an inflammation. The attack was short and sharp, but my convalescence was long, and it was months before I was fit to go out. During this time I ran through and devoured my *Treatise*. But it was so long, so diffuse, and so ill-arranged that I felt it would take me a considerable time to study and unravel it. I suspended my efforts, and refreshed myself with music. Bernier's cantatas, at which I practised, were continuously in my head. I learned four or five of them by heart, among others 'The Sleeping Lovers', which I have never seen since then and which I still know almost complete, as I do 'Love stung by a Bee', a very pretty cantata of Clérambault's, which I learned at about the same time.

To crown all, there arrived from the Val d'Aosta a young organist, the Abbé Palais, a good musician, a good man, and an excellent accompanist upon the clavichord. I made his acquaintance, and we became inseparable. He was the pupil of an Italian monk, who was a fine organist. He talked to me of his theories and I compared them with my Rameau's. I filled my head with accompaniments, chords, and harmonies. My ear needed training for all this, and I proposed to Mamma that she should give a little concert every month; she agreed. Then I was so full of this concert that I could think of nothing else, night or day; and indeed I had plenty to do in collecting the music, the

performers, and the instruments, writing out the parts and so on. Mamma sang, and Father Caton, of whom I have spoken and of whom I have still to speak, sang also. A dancing-master by the name of Roche and his son played the violin. Canavas, a Piedmontese musician, who worked on the survey and has since married in Paris, played the cello. The Abbé Palais accompanied on the clavichord, and I had the honour of conducting with a rough-and-ready baton. You can imagine how lovely it all was, not quite like the concert at M. de Freytorrens', but almost as good.

The little concert at Mme de Warens', the recent convert who was said to live on the King's charity, aroused protests from the ultra-devout; but it was enjoyed by many good people. No one will guess whom I put first among them on this occasion. A friar, but a friar of real talent, indeed a charming man, whose subsequent misfortunes deeply distressed me, and whose memory, linked with that of my good times, is still dear to me. I am thinking of Father Caton, a Franciscan, who jointly with Count Dortan had caused the poor *children's* music to be seized at Lyons; which is not the pleasantest incident in his life. He was a Bachelor of the Sorbonne, had lived long in Paris in the most fashionable circles, and had especially frequented the Marquis d'Antremont, then Sardinian ambassador. He was a large, well-built man with a full face, prominent eyes, and dark hair which fell in natural curls on his temples. His manner was at once noble, frank, and modest. His appearance was simple and pleasing. He had not that hypocritical or insolent bearing common in friars, nor the haughty attitude of a man of the world, although he was one. He had the assurance of an honourable man, who does not blush for his cloth but knows his value and always feels in his proper place in honourable company. Although Father Caton had not much learning for a doctor, he had plenty for a man of the world, and, not feeling compelled to display his knowledge, made such opportune use of it that it appeared greater than it was. Having lived long in society, he had cultivated pleasing accomplishments rather than solid learning. He had a witty tongue, wrote verses, talked well, sang better, had a fine voice, and played the organ and the clavichord. This was more than enough to make him sought after, and so he was. But so little did this cause him to neglect the duties of his profession that he succeeded, in spite of jealous rivals, in being elected Deputy to the Chapter for his province, in other words, in becoming one of the great pillars of his order.

Father Caton made Mamma's acquaintance at the Marquis d'Antremont's. He heard of our concerts and expressed a wish to take part in them. He did so, and made them delightful. Soon we became attached by our common taste for music, which was an intense passion on both sides; though with this difference, that he was a true musician, and I was no more than a strummer. We went with Canavas and the Abbé Palais to play with him in his room, and sometimes, on feast days, we would have music on the organ. We often dined at his modest table. For he had another quality surprising in a friar – he was generous, profuse, and enjoyed the things of the flesh, though not grossly. On the days of our concerts he supped at Mamma's. These suppers were very gay and most entertaining. We spoke with absolute freedom, and we sang duets. I was at my ease. I displayed wit and humour. Father Caton was charming, Mamma was adorable, and the Abbé Palais, with his bull's voice, was the common butt. Sweet moments of foolish youth, how long it is since you departed!

As I shall have no more to say of this poor Father Caton, let me conclude his sad story here in a few words. His brother monks were jealous, or rather angry, when they saw in him fine qualities and elegant manners without any of the usual monkish coarseness. So they grew to hate him for not being as hateful as themselves. Those in high places combined against him, and stirred up the little friars, who were envious of his position, but who had not dared to look at him before. He was insulted in many ways, dismissed from his office, deprived of his room, which he had furnished tastefully though simply, and banished I do not know where. Finally the wretches overwhelmed him with such indignities that his honest and justifiable pride could stand it no more; he who had been the delight of the most charming society died of grief on a miserable bed in some cell or dungeon, mourned by all the worthy people of his acquaintance, who could find no other fault in him except that of being a friar.

During this short spell I made such rapid progress and was so entirely absorbed in music that I was in no state to think of anything else. I never went to my office except reluctantly; the constraint and assiduity required by my work became an unendurable torture to me, and finally I expressed a wish to give it up in order to devote myself entirely to music. This foolishness, naturally enough, did not escape opposition. To resign a respectable post and a certain salary in order to chase after uncertain pupils was too senseless a proposition to

please Mamma. Even supposing my future success to prove as great as I imagined, it meant fixing very modest limits to my ambitions, to reduce myself for life to the status of musician. Never making any plans which were not great ones, and no longer taking me quite at M. d'Aubonne's valuation, she was sorry to see me seriously taken up with an accomplishment which she considered so trivial. Often she would repeat to me that country saying, which is less applicable in Paris, to the effect that singing and dancing is a trade that won't take a man far. On the other hand she saw me swept away by an irresistible attraction. My passion for music was becoming a mania, and it was to be feared that my work would suffer from my distraction and earn me a dismissal, which it would be better to forestall by resigning. I pointed out to her further that this employment was not for long, that I needed some accomplishment by which to live, and that it was safer to complete by practice my knowledge of the art to which my taste inclined me, and which she had chosen for me, than to put myself at the mercy of patronage, or to try something fresh which might not succeed, and might leave me too old to learn and without the means of gaining a livelihood. At last I extorted her consent rather by persistence and caresses than by any arguments that satisfied her. Then I ran to M. Corelli, general director of the survey, to offer my resignation, and with as much pride as if I were performing a heroic deed, I voluntarily gave up my employment without cause, reason, or excuse, and with as much and even greater joy than I had felt in taking it up two years before. This action, foolish though it was, earned me a sort of consideration in the country, which was useful to me. Some people credited me with means which I did not possess; others, seeing me entirely devoted to music, judged of my talent by my sacrifice, and supposed that with such enthusiasm for the art I must possess outstanding abilities. In the country of the blind the one-eyed man is king; I passed for a good teacher, because the rest in the town were bad. Besides I did not lack a certain taste for singing, and my age and looks were in my favour. So I soon had more lady pupils than I required to make up the clerk's pay I had lost.

So far as a pleasant life is concerned, certainly no one can ever have passed more rapidly from one extreme to the other. At the survey, occupied for eight hours a day at the most disagreeable employment with still more disagreeable people; shut up in a melancholy office poisoned by the breath and sweat of all those clods, the majority of whom were extremely ill-kempt and most unclean, I sometimes felt

so oppressed by the mental effort, the smells, the constraint and boredom that my head spun. Instead of that, here I was suddenly thrown among the world of fashion, admitted and sought after in the best houses, everywhere welcomed, made much of, fêted. Charming and beautifully dressed young ladies awaited me, and received me with fervour. I saw no objects that were not enchanting, smelt nothing but rose and orange blossom; there was singing, chatter, laughter, amusement; and no sooner did I leave than I went elsewhere to find the same reception. It will be agreed that, all things being equal, one could have no doubt which life to choose. So satisfied was I with mine that I never once repented of it; and I do not even repent of it at this moment, when I weigh the actions of my life on the scales of reason, and am no longer swayed by the rather foolish motives which led me to make that choice.

This is almost the only time when I have given in to my inclinations and not found myself deceived in my expectations. The friendliness, the sociability and the easy-going temperament of the Savoyards made my relations with people most pleasant; and the liking I took for society at that time has been a clear proof to me that if I do not enjoy living among men it is less my fault than theirs.

It is a pity that the Savoyards are not rich, or perhaps it would be a pity if they were. For, as they are, they are the best and most sociable people I know. If there is one place in the world where one can enjoy the sweetness of life in agreeable and friendly society, it is the little town of Chambéry. The gentry of the province, who gather there, have only sufficient wealth to live on, not enough to advance themselves; and being unable to indulge in ambitions, they necessarily follow the counsel of Cineas. They devote their youth to military service, and then return to grow old peacefully at home. Honour and reason preside equally over this division. Their women are handsome, yet stand in no need of beauty; they have every quality that gives beauty a value, and may even supply its place. It is remarkable that though my profession brought me the sight of many young girls I do not remember having seen a single one at Chambéry who was not attractive. It may be thought that I was disposed to find them so, and there may be some truth in that. But I had no need to add anything of my own to the charm they possessed. Indeed I cannot remember my young pupils without pleasure. Why, as I mention the most charming of them here, can I not summon them back, and myself with them, to that happy age we enjoyed, when I would spend hours

as innocent as they were sweet in their company! The first was Mlle de Mellarède, my neighbour and the sister of M. Gaime's pupil. She was a most lively brunette, but tender in her liveliness, which was graceful and never hoydenish. She was rather thin, like most girls of her age, but her bright eyes, her slender figure, and her attractive manner had no need of plumpness in order to please. I went to her in the mornings, when she was still generally in *déshabillé* with no other address than her hair, which was carelessly pinned up and set off by some flowers that she placed there on my arrival and removed on my departure so that her hair might be dressed. I dread nothing so much in the world as a pretty girl in *déshabillé*; I should dread her a hundred times less in full dress. Mlle de Menthon, to whom I went in the afternoons, was always so, and she made quite as pleasant an impression on me, though a different one. Her hair was an ashen blonde. She was very slight, very shy, and very fair. Her voice was clear, well-pitched, and flute-like, but she had not the courage to use its full compass. She had a scar on her breast where she had scalded herself with boiling water, which was only partially hidden by a neckerchief of blue chenille. This mark sometimes called my attention in this direction, though soon it was no longer on account of the scar. Mlle de Challes, another of my neighbours, was fully developed. She was a tall girl, well made and rather plump, and had once been very pretty. Though no longer a beauty, she deserves mention for her graciousness, her equable temper, and her good nature. Her sister, Mme de Charly, the most beautiful woman in Chambéry, no longer learnt music, but I gave lessons to her daughter, who was still young but whose budding beauty might have promised to be the equal of her mother's had she not, unfortunately, been a little carrot. At the Convent of the Visitation I had a little French girl whose name I have forgotten, but who deserves a place in my list of favourites. She had adopted the slow, drawling voice of the nuns, and in this drawling tone made some very clever remarks, that seemed quite out of keeping with her manner. Otherwise she was indolent, and usually could not be bothered to show her wits, a display of which was a favour she did not grant to everybody. It was only after a month or two of lessons and of laziness that she thought of this expedient for making me more punctual. For I have never been able to compel myself to keep good time. I enjoyed my lessons while I was giving them, but I did not like being obliged to go to them, nor being tied to time. In all matters constraint and compulsion are unbearable to me; they

would make me dislike even pleasure. It is said that among the Mohammedans a man goes through the streets at dawn to command all husbands to do their duty by their wives. At that hour I should be a bad Turk.

I had several girl pupils too among the middle class, and one in particular who was the indirect cause of a change in my relations with Mamma, of which I must speak since, after all, I have to tell everything. She was a grocer's daughter, Mlle Lard by name, the true model of a Greek statue, and whom I should quote as the most beautiful girl I have ever seen if real beauty could exist without life and without soul. Her indolence, her coldness, and her lack of feeling were quite incredible. It was equally impossible to please or to annoy her, and I am convinced that if any man had made an attempt on her virtue she would have let him have his way not out of inclination but out of stupidity. Her mother, who did not want to run the risk, never departed a step from her side. By making her learn singing and giving her a young master she was doing her best to rouse her; but that did not succeed. While the master provoked the daughter, the mother provoked the master, and that was hardly more successful. Mme Lard added to her natural vivacity all the skittishness her daughter should have possessed. She was a lively, pretty little woman with irregular features and marked with the smallpox. She had small, very burning eyes, which were rather red, because they were almost always sore. Every morning when I arrived, I found my coffee and cream ready; and the mother never failed to greet me with a kiss full on my lips, which I should have liked to return to the daughter out of curiosity, to see how she would take it. All this took place, however, so simply and so very casually that the provocation and the kissing were not interrupted even when M. Lard was present. He was a good-natured man, the true father of his daughter; and his wife did not deceive him, because there was no need to.

I submitted to all these caresses with my usual stupidity, taking them quite plainly as marks of true friendship. They did bother me, however, on occasions, for the lively Mme Lard was continuously exacting; and if in the course of the day I had passed the shop without looking in there would have been a row. When I was in a hurry I had to take a roundabout way and go down another street, for well I knew that it was easier to go in than to get away.

Mme Lard was too interested in me for me to be entirely uninterested in her. Her attentions touched me greatly, and I spoke of

them to Mamma, as something quite straightforward. Even if I had felt some mystery about them, I should have told her of them just the same. For I should have found it impossible to keep anything secret from her; my heart was open before her as before God. She did not take the matter quite so simply as I did. She saw advances where I had only seen friendship. She considered that if Mme Lard had made it a point of honour to leave me less of a booby than she found me, she would succeed in one way or another in making herself understood. And not only was it not right that another woman should undertake the instruction of her pupil, but she had also worthier motives for protecting me from the snares to which my age and profession exposed me. At this same time another snare was laid for me of a more dangerous kind, which I escaped but which made her feel that the dangers continuously threatening me called for every measure of protection that she could employ.

The Countess de Menthon, the mother of one of my pupils, was a woman of considerable wit, and had the reputation of being no less malicious. She was said to have been the cause of several quarrels, among them one that had had consequences fatal to the house of Antremont. Mamma had been sufficiently intimate with her to know her character. Having quite innocently attracted a certain gentleman on whom Mme de Menthon had designs, she was guilty in that lady's eyes of a heinous crime, although she had neither sought his preference nor accepted it; and from that time Mme de Menthon had attempted to do her rival several ill turns, none of which had succeeded. I will report one of the most comical by way of an example. They were together in the country with several gentlemen of the neighbourhood, among them the suitor in question, when Mme de Menthon remarked one day to one of them that Mme de Warens was no more than a blue-stocking, that she had no taste, that she dressed badly and kept her bosom covered like a tradesman's wife. 'As for this last point,' replied the man, who was a humourist, 'she has, as I know, her reasons. There is a mark on her breast like an ugly great rat, so much so indeed that it almost seems to be moving.' Hatred, like love, encourages credulity, and Mme de Menthon decided to make use of this discovery. So one day when Mamma was playing cards with that lady's ungrateful favourite, Mme de Menthon took an opportunity of slipping behind her rival. Then, half overturning her chair, she neatly displaced her neckerchief. But instead of a great rat the gentleman saw something quite different, which it was easier to see than to

forget; and that was not what the lady had intended.

I was not a person to interest Mme de Menthon, who wanted only brilliant company around her. However, she paid some attention to me, not for my looks, which certainly did not attract her in the least, but for the wit I was said to possess, which might have made me useful to her. She had a rather lively taste for satire, and was fond of making songs and verses about people whom she disliked. If she had found me clever enough to help her compose her verses and obliging enough to write them down, between the two of us we should soon have turned Chambéry upside down. Then the lampoons would have been traced to their source, Mme de Menthon would have extricated herself by sacrificing me, and I should perhaps have been imprisoned for the rest of my days, to teach me to play Apollo to the ladies.

Fortunately nothing of the sort took place. Mme de Menthon kept me to dinner two or three times in order to make me talk, and found that I was no better than a fool. I was conscious of this myself, and groaned, envying the talents of my friend Venture, whereas I should have been grateful to my stupidity for rescuing me from dangers. Henceforth for Mme de Menthon I was her daughter's singing master and no more. But I lived on in peace and was always welcome in Chambéry, which was far better than being a wit in her eyes, and a serpent in everyone else's.

However that may be, Mamma saw that to save me from the dangers of my youth it was time to treat me like a man, and this she did, but in the most singular fashion that ever occurred to a woman in like circumstances. I found her expression more serious and her conversation more moral than usual. The playful gaiety with which she usually interspersed her advice suddenly gave place to a sustained manner, neither familiar nor severe, which seemed preparatory to some explanation. After searching my mind in vain for the reason of this change, I asked her; and this was what she had been waiting for. She suggested a walk in the little garden for the next day; and early in the morning we were there. She had made arrangements for us to be left alone all that day, which she employed in preparing me for the favours she intended to grant me, not as any other woman would, by artifices and provocation, but by conversation full of feeling and good sense, better calculated to instruct me than to seduce me, and addressed to my heart rather than to my senses. But however excellent and to the purpose her speech to me may have been, and though it was very far from being cold or depressing, I did not give it all the

attention it deserved, nor did I engrave it on my memory, as I should have done at any other time. The apparent preparation with which she began had disquieted me; and as she spoke, I could not help being dreamy and distracted, and less concerned with what she was saying than with speculations as to what she was leading up to. Once I had understood her meaning, and that I did not find easy, the novelty of the idea, which all the time I had been living with her had never once come into my head, so completely took hold of me that I was no longer capable of paying attention to what she said. I only thought of her, but did not listen to her.

To try and make young people attend to the lesson you wish to give them by dangling in front of their eyes the prospect of something very interesting to follow is a most common mistake in teachers, and one that I did not myself avoid in my *Émile*. The young person is so struck by the object held before him that he bothers about nothing else, and leaps lightly over your preliminary discourse to go straight to the point to which you are leading him too slowly for his liking. When you want his attention you must not allow yourself to run ahead, and that is where Mamma was clumsy. With a singularity characteristic of her very systematic mind, she took the utterly needless precaution of laying down her conditions. But once I saw the prize I did not even listen to them and hastily consented to everything. I doubt, though, whether in such a case any man whatsoever would be frank or courageous enough to bargain, or any woman in the world would pardon him if he ventured to do so. With the same singularity, she attached to the agreement the most solemn formalities, giving me eight days to consider it, which I hypocritically assured her I did not require. For, to crown the singularity of the affair, I was extremely glad of the respite, so bowled over was I by the novelty of these ideas, and so conscious of a revolution in mine which would need some time to compose.

It might be supposed that these eight days dragged for me like so many centuries. On the contrary, I could have wished them centuries long. I do not know how to describe the state I was in; it was made up of fright mingled with impatience. I dreaded what I desired, to the point of sometimes seriously searching my brains for some honourable excuse for evading my promised happiness. Imagine my ardent and lascivious temperament, my heated blood, my love-intoxicated heart, my vigour, my sound health, and my youth. Consider that in this condition, though thirsting for the love of woman, I had not yet

approached one; that my imagination, need, vanity, curiosity, all combined to inflame me with the burning desire to be a man and prove myself one. Add, moreover – for this must not be forgotten – that my strong and tender affection, far from waning, had grown warmer with every day that passed; that I was only happy when beside her; that I only left her in order to think of her; that my heart was full not only of her kindnesses and her charming character, but of her sex, her form, her person; in a word, of herself, in every sense in which she was capable of being dear to me. And let it not be supposed that though ten or twelve years older than myself she had begun to age or seemed to me to have done so. In the five or six years since I had been so enraptured by the first sight of her she had really changed very little, and did not seem to me to have changed at all. For me she has always been charming, and then she was still so for everybody. Only her figure had become a little fuller. Otherwise it was the same eye, the same complexion, the same bosom, the same features, the same beautiful fair hair, the same gaiety, everything, even the same voice, that silvery voice of youth, which made so deep an impression on me that even to-day I cannot hear the sound of a pretty girlish voice without emotion.

What I had to fear whilst waiting to possess this beloved person was, naturally, the anticipation: the inability to control my desires and my imagination to a sufficient extent to remain master of myself. It will be seen that, in my latter age, the mere idea of some slight favours awaiting me from a woman I loved so heated my blood as to make it impossible for me to take the short journey to her side with impunity. How, by what miracle was it that in the flower of my youth I was so little eager for my first experience? How could I see the moment approaching with more pain than pleasure? How was it that instead of the delight which should have intoxicated me I felt almost repugnance and fear? There is not a doubt that if I could decently have avoided my happiness I should have done so with all my heart. I have promised some singularities in the history of my attachment for her; and here is certainly one feature that must be unexpected.

The reader, already disgusted, may consider that as she was already the mistress of another man, she degraded herself in my eyes by dividing her favours, and that a lowering of my respect for her cooled the passion she had inspired in me; he will be mistaken. This sharing, it is true, was very painful to me, as much on account of a very natural delicacy as because I thought it really unworthy of us both.

But it did not in the least alter my feelings for her, and I can swear that I never loved her more tenderly than when I so little desired to possess her. I knew her chaste heart and her icy disposition too well to believe for a moment that the pleasure of the senses had any part in this surrender of herself. I was perfectly certain that only her anxiety to preserve me from dangers otherwise almost inevitable, and to preserve me entire for myself and my duties, forced her to infringe a law that she did not look upon with the same eyes as other women, as will be observed hereafter. I was sorry for her and for myself. I should have liked to say: 'No, Mamma, it is not necessary. I can answer for myself without that.' But I dared not, firstly because it was not a thing to say, and then because, fundamentally, I felt that it was untrue, and that really there was only one woman who could safeguard me from other women and put me out of reach of temptation. Without desiring to possess her, I was glad that she robbed me of any desire to possess other women. For I viewed anything that might distract my attention from her as a misfortune. The long habit of living with her on terms of innocence, far from weakening my feelings for her, had strengthened them, but at the same time it had given them a different turn, rendering them more affectionate, and more tender perhaps, but less sexual. By calling her Mamma and treating her with the familiarity of a son, I had grown to look on myself as such; and I think that is the real cause of my lack of eagerness to possess her, even though she was so dear to me. I remember very well then my first feelings for her, though no stronger, were more voluptuous. At Annecy, I was in a state of intoxication; at Chambéry, I had ceased to be. I still loved her with the utmost passion. But I loved her more for herself and less on my own account, or rather I sought happiness and not pleasure in her company. She was to me more than a sister, more than a mother, more than a friend, more even than a mistress; and that is why she was not a mistress to me. In short I loved her too much to desire her; that is the clearest idea I have on the subject.

The day came at last, more dreaded than desired. I promised all and did not break my word. My heart fulfilled my pledges without any desire for the reward. I gained it nevertheless, and found myself for the first time in the arms of a woman, and of a woman I adored. Was I happy? No; I tasted the pleasure, but I knew not what invincible sadness poisoned its charm. I felt as if I had committed incest and, two or three times, as I clasped her rapturously in my arms I wet her

bosom with my tears. As for her, she was neither sad nor excited; she was tranquil and caressing. As she was not at all sensual and had not sought for gratification, she neither received sexual pleasure nor knew the remorse that follows.

All her faults, I repeat, came from her lack of judgement, never from her passions. She was of gentle birth, her heart was pure, she loved decency, her inclinations were upright and virtuous, her taste was refined; she was born for an elegant way of life which she always loved but never followed, because instead of listening to her heart, which gave her good counsel, she listened to her reason which gave her bad. When false principles led her astray, her true feelings always gave them the lie. But unfortunately she prided herself on her philosophy, and the morality she invented for herself corrupted that which her heart dictated.

M. de Tavel, her first lover, was her master in philosophy, and the principles which he taught her were those he required in order to seduce her. Finding her attached to her husband and her duties, and always cold, intellectual, and unassailable through her senses, he attacked her by means of sophistries and succeeded in proving to her that the duties to which she was so attached were so much nonsense, on a level with the catechism, fit only to amuse children. Sexual union, he argued, was an act most unimportant in itself; marital fidelity need merely be kept up in appearance, its moral importance being confined to its effect on public opinion; a wife's sole duty was to preserve her husband's peace of mind; consequently infidelities concealed did not exist for the offended partner, and were non-existent, therefore, to the conscience. He succeeded in persuading her that adultery in itself was nothing, and was only called into existence by scandal, and that every woman who appeared virtuous by that mere fact became so. Thus the wretch achieved his purpose by corrupting the mind of a child whose heart he could not corrupt. He was punished by the most devouring jealousy, for he believed that she was treating him as he had taught her to treat her husband. I do not know whether he was mistaken on this point. The minister Perret was supposed to have been his successor. All I know is that this young woman's coldness, which should have protected her from that way of life, was just what prevented her afterwards from giving it up. She could not imagine that so much importance could be attached to something which had none for her; and never dignified with the name of virtue an abstinence which cost her so little.

She would have been loath to take advantage of this false philosophy for her own ends; but she did so for others, and this by virtue of a rule almost equally false but more consonant with the kindness of her heart. She always believed that nothing attaches a man to a woman so much as possession; and though her feeling for her men friends was one of pure friendship, it was of such a tender friendship that she used every means in her power to attach them more closely to herself. The extraordinary thing is that she almost always succeeded. She was so genuinely lovable that the greater the intimacy in which one lived with her, the more fresh reasons one found for loving her. Another point worth noting is that after her first weakness she only bestowed her favours on the unfortunate. Persons of distinction all wasted their labours on her. But men for whom she began to feel sympathy would have to be very unlikeable if she did not end by loving them. When she chose men who were unworthy of her, it was certainly not out of low tastes, for such were foreign to her noble heart. It was simply because of her too generous nature, because of her too humane, sympathetic, and sensitive disposition, which she did not always control with sufficient discernment.

If some false principles led her astray, how many admirable ones did she not possess from which she never departed? By how many virtues did she redeem her weaknesses, if one should give that name to errors in which her senses played so little part! That same man who deceived her in one respect gave her excellent instruction in a thousand others. And since her passions were never impetuous and always permitted her to follow her lights, she took the right path when her sophistries did not mislead her. Her motives were praiseworthy even in her errors; when mistaken, she could act badly but she could never desire what was wrong. She loathed duplicity and lying; she was just, equitable, humane, disinterested, true to her word, her friends, and what she recognized as her duties, incapable of hatred or vengeance, and not even imagining that there was the slightest merit in forgiveness. Finally, to return to her less excusable qualities, though she did not rate her favours at their true worth, she never made a common trade in them; she conferred them lavishly but she did not sell them, though continually reduced to expedients in order to live; and I would venture to say that if Socrates could esteem Aspasia, he would have respected Mme de Warens.

By ascribing to her a sensitive character and a cold nature, I know in advance that I shall be accused, as usual, of being contradictory,

and with no more reason than usual. It is possible that Nature was at fault, and that such a combination should not have existed; I only know that it did exist. Everyone who knew Mme de Warens – and very many of them are still alive – will be aware that such was her character. I will even venture to add that she knew only one true pleasure in the world, and that was to give pleasure to those she loved. Nevertheless anyone is at liberty to argue the matter as he will, and prove learnedly that I am wrong. My function is to tell the truth, not to make people believe it.

I learned all that I have just said little by little during the conversation that followed our union, and which alone made it delightful. She had been right in hoping that her complaisance would be useful to me; in the matter of education, I derived great advantage from it. Up to that time she talked to me about myself alone, as if to a child. Now she began to treat me as a man and to speak of herself. Everything she told me so interested me and I was so touched by it that, when I retired within myself, I derived greater profit from these confidences than ever I had done from her instructions. When we really feel that a heart is speaking, ours opens to receive its confidences; and all the moralizing of a pedagogue will never be as good as the affectionate and tender chatter of an intelligent woman for whom we feel an affection.

The intimacy in which I lived with her gave her the opportunity of forming a more favourable opinion of me than she had done before. She concluded that despite my awkward manner I deserved to be trained for the world, and that if I one day showed myself there on a certain footing, I should be in the position to make my way. With this in view, she devoted herself not only to forming my mind but also my outward appearance and my manners, so that I might be equally attractive and estimable; and if one can really combine worldly success with virtue – which, for my part, I do not believe – I am at least certain that there is no other way but the one she had taken herself and wished to teach me. For Mme de Warens knew mankind and was highly skilled in the art of dealing with men, without lying and without indiscretion, without deception, and without offence. But this art was natural to her, she could not teach it; she was better able to put it into practice than to explain it, and of all men in the world I was the least capable of learning it. So all her efforts to this end were more or less wasted, as were all the pains she took to provide me with dancing- and fencing-masters. Although agile and well made, I could

not learn to dance a minuet. I was so much in the habit of walking on my heels because of my corns that Roche could not break me of it; and never in spite of my nimble appearance should I have been able to jump an ordinary ditch. It was even worse at the fencing-school. After three months of lessons I was still confined to parrying and incapable of delivering an attack. I never had a supple enough wrist or a firm enough arm to keep my foil if the master chose to knock it out of my hand. What is more, I had a mortal aversion for that exercise and for the master who endeavoured to teach it to me. I should never have believed that anyone could take such pride in the art of killing a man. In order to put his vast genius within my reach, he expressed himself only in comparisons drawn from music, of which he had no knowledge. He found striking analogies between a thrust in tierce and carte and the musical intervals of thirds and fourths. When he intended to make a feint, he told me to look out for a sharp because a sharp was formerly called a 'feint'; when he had knocked my foil out of my hand he would say with a grin: 'Now here's a rest.' Never in all my life, indeed, have I met a more unbearable pedant than this poor fellow with his foils and his leather pad.

I made slight progress in these exercises, therefore, and soon abandoned them out of pure disgust. But I succeeded better in a more useful art, that of being content with my lot and of not desiring a more brilliant one, for which I was beginning to feel I was not born. Being entirely given over to the desire of making Mamma's life happy, I was always most content when in her company; and when I had to leave her and hurry into the town, despite my passion for music I began to feel my lessons as a restraint. .

I do not know whether Claude Anet perceived the intimacy of our relations. I have reason to think that it was not concealed from him. He was a very clear-sighted fellow, but a very discreet one, who never said the opposite of his thoughts but did not always reveal them. Without giving me the least sign of being informed, he appeared by his conduct to be so; and that conduct was certainly not due to any baseness of soul, but to the fact that, having subscribed to his mistress's principles, he could not disapprove of her acting in accordance with them. Although no older than she, he was so mature and grave that he almost looked on us as two children who deserved indulgence, and we both looked on him as a man worthy of respect, whose esteem we must cultivate. It was only after she had been unfaithful to him that I really knew what an affection she had for him. Since she

knew that I did not think, feel, or breathe except through her, she showed me the extent of her love for him so that I might love him equally; and she laid less stress upon the friendship than on the respect that she felt for him, since that was the feeling that I could most fully share. How many times did she melt our hearts and cause us to embrace in tears, by telling us that we were both necessary for her life's happiness! And let not any woman who reads this give a malicious smile! With a temperament such as hers, there was nothing dubious about this need; it was simply that of her heart.

Thus between the three of us was established a bond perhaps unique on this earth. Our every wish and care and affection was held in common, none of them extending outside our own little circle. Our habit of living together, to the exclusion of the outer world, became so strong that if one of the three was missing from a meal or a fourth person joined us, everything was spoiled; and in spite of our private relationships even our *tête-à-têtes* were less delightful than our being all three together. All constraint between us was banished by our complete mutual confidence, all boredom by the fact that we were all extremely busy. Mamma, with her perpetual plans and activities, hardly ever left either of us men idle, and we each had sufficient affairs of our own to fill our time. Lack of occupation is, in my opinion, as much a scourge of society as solitude. Nothing so narrows the mind, nothing engenders more nonsense – tales and mischief, gossiping and lies – than for people to be eternally confined in one another's company, in one room, reduced, for lack of anything to do, to the necessity of incessant chatter. When everyone is busy, no one speaks unless he has something to say. But when one is doing nothing it is imperative to talk all the time; and that is the most wearisome and the most dangerous of all forms of constraint. I will even go further and maintain that to make any society really pleasant, not only must everyone be doing something, but something that requires a certain amount of attention. Crochet is as bad as doing nothing; it takes as much to amuse a woman who is crocheting as one who is sitting with folded hands. But if she is embroidering, that is different; she is sufficiently occupied to fill the intervals of silence. What is both shocking and absurd is to see a dozen gawky fellows, at those moments, get up, sit down, walk backwards and forwards, turn on their heels, move the china figures up and down on the mantelpiece, and rack their brains to maintain an inexhaustible flow of words. What an occupation! When I was at Motiers I used to go to my

women neighbours to make laces; and if ever I went back into society I should carry a cup-and-ball in my pocket, and play with it all day long to excuse myself from speaking when I had nothing to say. If everyone were to do the same men would become less malicious, and society would become safer and, I think, more agreeable. In fact, let wits laugh if they will, but I maintain that the only morality within the reach of the present century is the morality of the cup-and-ball.

Nevertheless, we were seldom left with the task of avoiding tedium for ourselves. Tiresome people afforded us too much boredom by their visits to leave us any over for when we were alone. The impatience they had caused me in the old days had not diminished; all the difference was that now I had less time to indulge in my feelings. Poor Mamma had not lost her old addiction for enterprises and schemes. On the contrary, the more urgent her domestic embarrassments, the more she resorted to her visionary means of solving them; the smaller her present resources, the more she invented for the future. Advancing years only increased this folly of hers; and as she gradually lost her taste for the pleasures of the world and of youth, she replaced it by a mania for plans and secrets. The house was never free from quacks, manufacturers, alchemists, and promoters of all kinds, who dealt in fortunes by the million but ended in need of a crown piece. No one left her house empty-handed, and what most amazes me is that she was able to squander money for so long without ever exhausting her means or tiring out her creditors.

The scheme upon which she was most occupied at the time I am speaking of, and which was not the most unreasonable she had devised, was to establish a royal botanical garden at Chambéry, with a paid curator; and it is easy to guess for whom this post was intended. The town's situation, in the midst of the Alps, was most favourable for botanical purposes; and Mamma, who always backed up one scheme with another, had added that of a college of pharmacy, which really seemed likely to be most useful in that poor country where apothecaries are almost the only doctors. The retirement to Chambéry of Grossi, the physician-in-ordinary, after the death of King Victor, seemed to her to facilitate her plan. Perhaps, in fact, it was his arrival that suggested it. However that may be, she began to cajole Grossi, who was not very cajolable. He was indeed the most caustic and brutal fellow I have ever met, as will be clear from two or three tales which I will quote as specimens.

One day he was in consultation with some other doctors, among

them one who had been sent for from Annecy and who was the patient's usual attendant. This young man, who was still rather tactless for a doctor, ventured to disagree with the physician-in-ordinary. Whereupon Grossi, by way of reply, asked him when he was going back, what towns he was passing through, and what coach he was taking. The young doctor answered his questions, and then inquired in his turn if he could be of any service to him. 'None, none at all,' replied Grossi, 'except that I should like to sit at the window as you go by, so as to have the pleasure of seeing an ass riding on horseback.' Grossi was as mean as he was rich and hard. One of his friends, one day, wanted to borrow some money from him on good security. 'My friend,' he answered, squeezing the fellow's arm and gritting his teeth, 'if Saint Peter came down from Heaven to borrow a hundred francs from me and offered me the Trinity as a surety I should not lend.' One day he was invited to dinner by the Count Picon, Governor of Savoy and a very pious man. He arrived early and his Excellency, whom he found telling his beads, proposed that he should amuse himself in the same way. Not knowing quite how to reply, Grossi made the most dreadful face and fell on his knees; but after reciting two Aves he could stand it no longer. He got up brusquely, took his stick and went out without a word. Whereupon Count Picon ran after him, crying: 'Monsieur Grossi! Monsieur Grossi! Stay, if you please. There's an excellent red partridge roasting for you on the spit.' 'My dear Count,' replied Grossi turning back, 'if you were to offer me a roast angel I should not stay.' Such was Grossi, the physician-in-ordinary, whom Mamma took in hand and succeeded in taming. Although extremely busy, he got into the habit of paying her frequent visits, conceived a friendship for Anet, showed that he appreciated his knowledge and spoke of him with respect. Moreover, though one would not have expected it from such a bear, he treated him with deliberate consideration, in order to obliterate the impressions of the past. For although Anet was no longer in the position of a servant it was well known that he had been one, and it needed nothing less than the example and authority of the physician-in-ordinary to make people show him a consideration that they would have accorded to no one else. Claude Anet, with his black coat and his well-combed wig, with his grave and sober appearance, and his wise and circumspect manner, with his considerable knowledge of drugs and of botany and with the favour of the head of the faculty, might reasonably have hoped successfully to fill the post of Royal Curator of Plants, if the

projected establishment had been set up; and, in fact, Grossi had approved the plan, taken it up and intended to present it to the Court as soon as peace should permit them to consider useful projects, and leave them command over enough money to see them through.

But this scheme, whose realization would probably have immersed me in botany – a study for which I believe I was born – failed owing to one of those unexpected blows which upset the best laid plans. I was fated gradually to become an example of human misery. It was as if the Providence who summoned me to these great ordeals removed with His own hand every obstacle that might have saved me from undergoing them. On an expedition to the mountain-tops in search of *genipi*, a rare plant which only grows in the Alps and which M. Grossi required, poor Anet got so overheated that he contracted a pleurisy from which his *genipi* could not save him, although it is said to be efficacious in such cases.* Despite all Grossi's art – and he was certainly a very clever man – and despite the infinite care we took of him, his kind mistress and I, he died in our arms on the fifth day, after the cruellest suffering, with no other spiritual exhortations than my own; and these I lavished on him amidst transports of such heart-felt grief that if he had been in the state to understand me, he should have received some consolation. In that way I lost the staunchest friend I had had in all my life; a rare and estimable man in whom nature supplied the defects of education and who, though in the position of a servant, possessed all the virtues of a great man, only lacking, perhaps, in order to prove himself one to all the world, some more years of life and a suitable post.

Next day I was talking of him to Mamma, in the deepest and sincerest of grief, when suddenly, in the middle of our conversation, the vile and unworthy thought came to me that I should inherit his clothes, and particularly a fine black coat which had caught my fancy. No sooner did it occur to me than I gave utterance to my thought; for in her presence thought and speech were to me as one. Nothing made her more conscious of her loss than those mean and odious words, for disinterestedness and nobility had been outstanding qualities in the dead man. The poor woman did not reply, but turned away and began to weep. Dear and precious tears! They were understood and flowed right into my heart, from which they washed away every

[* There is no confirmation of this story, and it has been suggested by some biographers that Anet died of grief, or killed himself, on finding himself supplanted in Mme de Warens' affections by Jean-Jacques.]

trace of that low and contemptible thought. Never since then has any similar thought entered there.

Her loss caused Mamma as much harm as sorrow. From that moment her affairs never ceased to deteriorate. Anet had been an exact and methodical young man, who kept order in his mistress's house. They were afraid of his watchfulness, and extravagance was checked. She herself was afraid of his criticism and grew more restrained in her wastefulness. His affection was not enough for her; she wanted to retain his respect, and she was afraid of the merited reproaches he sometimes ventured to make her, to the effect that she was squandering other people's money as well as her own. I thought as he did, and even said so; but I had not the same ascendancy over her, and my protests had not the same effect as his. When he was gone, I was compelled to take his place, but I had neither the taste nor the aptitude for it, and filled it badly. I was not very careful, I was very timid; while I grumbled to myself I let things go their own way. Besides, though I had her confidence I had not Anet's authority. I saw the confusion, I groaned and complained, and was not heard. I was too young and too lively to have earned the right to be sensible, and when I tried to interfere and became censorious Mamma slapped me playfully on the cheeks, called me her little mentor and forced me to resume the part which suited me.

My profound conviction that her unlimited extravagance was bound sooner or later to plunge her into distress affected me much more now that I was the overseer of her household and could judge for myself of the disproportion between her expenditure and her income. From that epoch I date the tendency to avarice to which I have been subject ever since. I have never been madly prodigal except by fits and starts; but up to that time I had never felt greatly concerned whether I had much money or little. Now I began to pay the matter some attention, and to take care of my purse. I became mean from the noblest of motives. For in truth I was only thinking of husbanding something for Mamma against the catastrophe which I foresaw. I was afraid that her creditors might lay hold on her pension, and that it might be altogether stopped and, taking a narrow view of things, I imagined that my little hoard might then be of great help to her. But in order to collect it, and even more to keep it, I had to conceal things from her: for when she was hard pressed for money it would never have done if she had known that I had a tidy sum put by. So I went about looking for little hiding-places in which I would stow

a few *louis*, intending continually to increase my store up to the moment when I would place it at her feet. But I was so unskilful in the choice of my hiding-places that she always smelt them out. Then, to show me that she had discovered them, she would take out the money I had put in, and replace it by a larger sum in different coinage. Whereupon I would feel ashamed and restore my little treasure to the common purse, and she would never fail to spend it on clothes or other articles for my use, such as a silver sword, or a watch, or something of that kind.

Being now convinced that I should never succeed in saving, and that, after all, what I set aside could be of little avail to her, I felt that my only means of combating the disaster I feared would be to put myself in the position to provide for her subsistence as soon as she ceased to provide for me and found herself on the point of starvation. Unfortunately I shaped my plans according to my own tastes, and foolishly persisted in seeking my fortune in music. I felt themes and songs springing up in my head, and believed that as soon as I was in a state to make use of them I should become a famous man, a modern Orpheus, whose music would attract all the wealth of Peru. Now that I was beginning to read music fairly well, the next thing was to learn composition. The difficulty was to find someone to teach me. For I did not expect to learn by myself, with only my Rameau for assistance, and there was no one in Savoy who knew anything of harmony.

Here is another example of the inconsistencies which fill my life, and have often led me right away from my goal at the moment when I imagined that I was heading directly for it. Venture had talked to me a great deal about the Abbé Blanchard, his composition master, a man of great merit and talents, who was at that time choirmaster of Besançon Cathedral, and now occupies that post at the Chapel of Versailles. I conceived the idea of going to Besançon and taking lessons with the Abbé; and I thought the idea such a reasonable one that I succeeded in making Mamma think so too. So she immediately started getting a little outfit together for me, with the same extravagance with which she did everything. So, firm in my purpose of staving off her bankruptcy and of one day repairing the consequences of her squandering, I began at the outset to cause her an outlay of eight hundred francs. In fact in order to put myself in a position to prevent her ruin I accelerated it. Foolish though this conduct of mine was, the illusion was complete on my side and on hers too. We were both of

us convinced, I that I was working for her benefit, and she that I was doing a good thing for myself.

I had expected to find Venture still at Annecy, and to get a letter from him to the Abbé Blanchard. He was no longer there. I could learn nothing of him, and had to be satisfied with a four-part mass of his composition, written out in his own hand, which he had left for me. With this introduction, I went to Besançon, by way of Geneva, where I visited my relations, and of Nyon, where I called on my father, who received me in his usual way and undertook to send my trunk on after me, for it was following me since I was on horseback. I came to Besançon, where the Abbé Blanchard welcomed me, promised to teach me, and offered to assist me in every way. We were just about to begin when I learned from a letter of my father's that my trunk had been seized and confiscated at Rousses, a French customs office on the Swiss frontier. Alarmed at this news, I made use of the acquaintances I had formed at Besançon to inquire the reason for this confiscation. For I was quite certain that it contained no contraband, and I could not imagine what pretext there had been for its seizure. In the end I found out, and the reason was so curious that I must relate it.

At Chambéry I used to see an old fellow from Lyons, a very decent man called M. Duvivier, who had worked in the passport office under the Regency, and who, being without employment, had come to assist in the land survey. He had lived in the world of fashion, possessed some talent and a little learning, was kind-hearted and well-mannered. He understood music, and as I shared a room with him we grew to prefer each other's company to that of the ill-licked cubs all around us. He had correspondents in Paris who kept him supplied with those little trifles, those ephemeral publications, which circulate for no reason and die one knows not how, without anyone ever giving them another thought once they have ceased to be talked of. As I sometimes took him to dine with Mamma he to some extent cultivated me and, to make himself pleasant, tried to get me interested in these silly trifles, for which I have always felt such a disgust that never in my life have I read one for my own pleasure. Unfortunately one of these wretched papers happened to be in the breast-pocket of a new coat that I had worn two or three times, in order to get it through the customs. This paper was an insipid Jansenist parody of the great scene from Racine's *Mithridates*. I had not read ten lines of it, but had inadvertently left it in that pocket, which was the reason for the confiscation of my luggage. At the head of the inventory of that trunk,

the customs officials had set out an imposing report, which assumed that this document had come from Geneva to be printed and distributed in France, and in which they launched into pious invectives against the enemies of God and the Church, and in praise of their own holy vigilance which had prevented the execution of this devilish plan. No doubt they thought that my shirts too smelt of heresy. For on the strength of this dreadful paper everything was confiscated, and I have never received any account or news of my poor outfit. The revenue officers to whom we applied demanded so many instructions, proofs, affidavits, and statements that I was continually lost in the maze, and was compelled to give the whole thing up. I am really sorry that I did not keep the report of the customs office at Rousses; it was a document which would have taken a distinguished place in the collection with which I intend to supplement this narrative.

This loss made me return to Chambéry at once, without having learnt anything from the Abbé Blanchard. There, after weighing things up carefully and seeing the misfortunes that pursued me in all my enterprises, I resolved to attach myself entirely to Mamma, to share her fortune and to give up my useless concern about a future which I was powerless to affect. She welcomed me as if I had brought back treasures, and gradually replaced my small wardrobe. So my mishap, which was equally serious for us both, was forgotten almost as soon as it occurred.

Although this mishap had damped my musical enthusiasm, I still did not give up studying my Rameau. By hard work I finally managed to understand it and to make a few small efforts at composition, the success of which encouraged me. The Count de Bellegarde, the Marquis d'Antremont's son, had returned from Dresden after the death of King Augustus. He had lived for a long time in Paris, was extremely fond of music, and had a passion for Rameau. His brother, the Count de Nangis, played the violin, and their sister, the Countess de La Tour, sang a little. All this set up a fashion for music at Chambéry, and something like public concerts were arranged, the direction of which they at first decided to entrust to me. But the task was soon seen to be beyond my powers, and other arrangements were made. This did not deter me from giving them some little pieces of my composition, among them a cantata which was much liked. It was not a well-made piece, but it was full of new tunes and effects, which they had not expected from me. Seeing that I read music so badly, these gentlemen could not believe that I was capable of composing

passable tunes, and they had no doubt that I had taken credit for someone else's work. To verify their suspicions, M. de Nangis called on me one morning with a cantata of Clérambault's which he had transposed, he said, for convenience of singing, and which required a fresh bass part, since the transposition had made the original unsuitable for the instrument. I answered that this was a considerable job, and could not be done on the spot. He thought that I was looking for an excuse and pressed me to write the bass of at least one recitative. I did so, therefore, badly no doubt, because if I am to do anything successfully I always require liberty and leisure. But at least I did it according to the rules; and as he was a witness he could not doubt that I knew the elements of composition. So I did not lose my girl pupils, but it somewhat cooled my enthusiasm for music to see that they could hold a concert and do without me.

It was at more or less this time that peace was made and the French army came back across the mountains. Several officers came to see Mamma, amongst others the Count de Lautrec – colonel of the Orléans regiment, afterwards Plenipotentiary at Geneva, and finally Marshal of France – to whom she introduced me. After hearing her account of me, he seemed to view me with great interest, and made me several promises, which he did not remember till the last year of his life, when I no longer needed him. The young Marquis de Sennecterre, whose father was then ambassador at Turin, passed through Chambéry at the same time. He dined at Mme de Menthon's on a day when I was also dining there. After dinner there was some talk about music, of which he had some knowledge. The opera *Jephtha* was then a novelty. He spoke of it, and the score was brought in. He made me shudder by suggesting that we two should run it through, and as he opened the book he lighted on that famous piece for two choirs:

La terre, l'enfer, le ciel même,
Tout tremble devant le Seigneur.*

'How many parts will you take?' he asked me. 'I will take these six.' I was not yet accustomed to this French impetuosity, and though I had sometimes stumbled through a score, I did not see how the same man could take six parts at once, or even two. I have never found anything so difficult in the practice of music as this airy leaping from part to part, with one's eye on the whole score at once. From the way

* The earth, hell, and heaven too, all tremble before the Lord.

evaded this ordeal, M. de Sennecterre must have been tempted to conclude that I knew nothing about music. It was perhaps in order to verify his suspicions that he proposed I should score a song which he intended to give to Mme de Menthon. I could not get out of it. As he sang it, I wrote it down, without asking for too many repetitions. He then read it over, and remarked that it was quite correct, as was the case. He had noticed my embarrassment, and was pleased to call attention to my trifling success. It was, however, a very simple matter. Really I had a considerable knowledge of music; I only lacked that power of reading at sight which was never mine in any subject, and which can only be acquired in music by constant practice. However that may be, I was grateful for his honest endeavours to make good my slight embarrassment and to efface the memory of it from the minds of the others. Twelve or fifteen years later, indeed, when I met him at various Paris houses I was often tempted to remind him of this incident, and to show him that I had not forgotten it. But he had lost his sight since then, and I was afraid of giving him fresh pain by recalling the use he had once made of it. So I remained silent.

I am now coming to a moment when my past life begins to connect with my present. Several friendships of those days have endured till now, and have become very precious to me. They have often made me regret that happy obscurity in which those who called themselves my friends were so and loved me for myself, out of pure good will and not out of vanity at being intimate with a well-known man, or out of a secret desire for acquiring more opportunities of injuring him. It is from this time that I date my earliest acquaintance with my old friend Gauffecourt, who has always been true to me despite every effort that has been made to alienate him from me. Always! No. Alas, I have just lost him. But his love for me only ceased with his life, and our friendship only ended when he did. M. de Gauffecourt was one of the most charming men who have ever lived. It was impossible to see him without loving him, or to live with him without becoming utterly attached to him. I have never in all my life seen more frank and kindly features, nor a face that expressed greater serenity, more feeling or more intelligence, nor one that inspired greater confidence. No one, however reserved, could possibly help being as familiar with him, at a first meeting, as if he had known him twenty years; and I, who had such difficulty in being at my ease with new faces, was comfortable with him from the first moment. His manner, his way of speaking, and his conversation were in perfect keeping with his

countenance. His tone of voice was clear and full and ringing, a fine bass, sonorous and incisive, which filled the ear and sounded upon the heart. It is impossible to imagine a more equable and kindly gaiety, or more genuine and simple graces, or talents at once so natural and so nicely cultivated. Add to this an affectionate heart – a little too indiscriminately affectionate – a nature anxious to oblige though, with a little discretion, serving his friends zealously, or rather making friends of those whom he could serve, and capable of cleverly managing his own affairs whilst warmly pursuing the interests of others. Gauffecourt was the son of a simple clock-maker, and had been a clock-maker himself. But his appearance and merits called him into another sphere, which he was not slow in entering. He made the acquaintances of M. de la Closure, the French Resident in Geneva, who took a liking for him, and secured other acquaintances for him in Paris. These were useful to him, and through their influence he obtained the privilege of supplying Valais salt, which was worth twenty thousand francs a year to him. This, so far as the world of men was concerned, was the limit of his fortune, which was fair enough. But in regard to women things were more difficult; he had to make a choice, and did what he thought best. The rarest and most honourable thing about him was that, having connexions with all classes, he was everywhere beloved, and sought after by everyone, without ever incurring anyone's hatred or jealousy; and I think that he died without ever in his life having had a single enemy. Happy man! Every year he visited the baths at Aix, where good society gathers from the neighbouring countries. Intimate with all the nobility of Savoy, he came from Aix to Chambéry to see the Count de Bellegarde and his father the Marquis d'Antremont, at whose house Mamma met him and introduced him to me. This acquaintance, which seemed likely to lead to nothing and which was interrupted for a number of years, was renewed on an occasion that I shall mention and became a genuine bond. This is enough to justify me in speaking of a friend with whom I was so intimately connected. But even if I had no personal interest in remembering him, he was so charming a man and born under such a lucky star, that I should always think his memory worth preserving for the honour of the human race. This delightful man had, nevertheless, his faults like others, as will be seen hereafter. Yet if he had had none perhaps he would not have been so lovable. To make him as attractive as he was, there had to be something about him that required pardoning.

Another connexion from those days still survives, and still tempts me with that hope of earthly happiness which dies so hard in the heart of man. M. de Conzié, a Savoyard gentleman, then young and charming, had a fancy for learning music, or rather for making the acquaintance of the man who taught it. With some intelligence and a taste for polite accomplishments, M. de Conzié combined a sweetness of nature which made him very attractive; and I was quite attractive myself to people in whom I found that quality. Our friendship was soon formed.* The seeds of literature and philosophy, which were beginning to stir in my brain, and which required only a little care and competition for their complete development, found both in him. M. de Conzié had little talent for music, which was a good thing for me; the hours of our lessons were devoted to other pursuits than singing scales. We lunched and talked and read the new publications, but never a word about music. Voltaire's correspondence with the Crown Prince of Prussia was then causing some stir, and we often discussed those two famous men, one of whom had but lately ascended the throne and already gave promise of being what he was soon to prove himself, while the other, as decried then as he is now admired, made us sincerely deplore the misfortune which seemed to pursue him, and which one so often sees to be the portion of great minds. The Prince of Prussia had not been very happy in his youth, and Voltaire seemed made never to be so. The interest that we took in them both extended to everything connected with them. Nothing that Voltaire wrote escaped us. The pleasure I derived from these readings fired me with the desire for learning to write a good style, and for trying to imitate the fine effects of this writer who so delighted me. A little later his *Philosophical Letters* appeared and, although they are certainly not his best work, it was they that most attracted me towards learning, my taste for which was born at that time and has never been extinguished since.

But the moment had not arrived for me to devote myself to it entirely. I still had a somewhat restless disposition and a fancy for wandering, which had been restrained but was not extinct. Indeed it was fostered by our way of life in Mme de Warens' house, which was too noisy for my solitary humour. That host of strangers who flocked to her every day from all quarters, and my conviction that their only

*I have seen him since and found him utterly changed. What a mighty magician is M. Choiseul! Not one of my old acquaintances has withstood his powers of transformation.

purpose was to impose on her, each in his own way, made living with her a real torture. Since I had succeeded Claude Anet in his mistress's confidence, I narrowly watched the state of her affairs, and saw a progressive decay in them which alarmed me. Countless times I had remonstrated with her, begged her and urged her, but always in vain. I had thrown myself at her feet, I had forcibly warned her of the catastrophe that threatened her, I had passionately exhorted her to cur down her expenses, and make her first savings on me. I implored her rather to suffer some slight privation while she was still young than continually to pile up her debts and increase the number of her creditors, and so expose herself to vexations and poverty in her old age. Touched by my sincere concern, she came to feel as I did and made me the finest promises in the world. But the moment some worthless wretch turned up, all was forgotten. After a thousand proofs that my remonstrances were in vain, what alternative had I but to avert my eyes from the trouble I could not prevent? I withdrew from the house whose door I was unable to guard. I made short expeditions to Nyon, Geneva, and Lyons, which allayed my secret anxiety, though their cost increased the cause of it. I can swear that I would gladly have put up with any retrenchments if Mamma had really profited by such a saving. But being convinced that any money I denied myself would fall into the pockets of rogues, I abused her open-handedness and took my share with them. So like a dog returning from the slaughterhouse, I carried off my bit of the piece I had been unable to save.

I did not lack pretexts for these various journeys. Mamma herself could have supplied me with enough and to spare, so many engagements, negotiations, and affairs did she have in all parts, and so many errands which required a trusty agent. She was only anxious to send me off, and I asked for nothing better than to go: a state of things that could not fail to provide me with a wandering sort of life. These journeys afforded me opportunities of making some sound acquaintances, who have subsequently been either pleasant or useful to me: at Lyons, M. Perrichon, whom I blame myself for not having cultivated sufficiently, considering the kindnesses he showed me, and the good Parisot, of whom I shall speak in due course; at Grenoble, Mme Deybens, and Mme la Présidente de Bardouanche, a woman of great intelligence who would have been a friend if I had been able to see her more often; at Geneva, M. de la Closure, the French Resident, who often spoke to me of my mother, and the Barrilots, father and son, the former of whom used to call me his grandson. He was very good

company and the worthiest man I have ever known. During the troubles of the Republic these two citizens joined the two opposite parties: the son that of the people, the father that of the magistrates; and when fighting began, while I was at Geneva in 1737, I saw the pair of them come armed out of the same house, one to go up to the Town Hall and the other to his station, in the certainty of meeting face to face a couple of hours later, with the chance of cutting one another's throats. This frightful spectacle made such a strong impression on me that I vowed if ever I were to regain my rights of citizenship, never to take part in any civil war, and never to uphold domestic liberty by force of arms either in my own person or by proxy. I can take credit for having kept that oath in a delicate situation; and it will be judged – so at least I expect – that my restraint was of some value.

But I had not yet arrived at that first patriotic ferment which the sight of Geneva in arms aroused in my heart. How far away it still was will be clear from one very serious fact to my discredit, which I have forgotten to record in its place, but which should not be passed over.

My uncle Bernard had, some years before, crossed over to Carolina to build the city of Charlestown, for which he had drawn up the plans, and there he had died shortly afterwards. My poor cousin had died also in the King of Prussia's service, and so my aunt lost her son and her husband at almost the same time. These losses somewhat revived her friendship for the nearest relative left to her, which was myself. I stayed with her whenever I went to Geneva, and amused myself by rummaging in the books and turning over the papers that my uncle had left. I found among them a number of curious documents, and some letters whose existence no one would have suspected. My aunt attached little value to this mass of papers, and would have let me take everything away if I had wanted to. I contented myself with two or three books annotated in the writing of my grandfather Bernard, the minister, and amongst them the posthumous works of Rohault in quarto, the margins of which were full of excellent notes, which gave me a taste for mathematics. This book remained among those of Mme de Warens, and it has always annoyed me that I did not keep it. Besides these I took five or six manuscript pamphlets, and a single printed one which was by the famous Micheli Ducret, a man of great talent, learning, and enlightenment. But he was too revolutionary, and was cruelly treated by the magistrates of Geneva. He died recently in the fortress of Arberg in which he had been confined for many years, for having, allegedly, taken part in the Berne conspiracy.

This pamphlet was a well-considered criticism of the extensive and ridiculous plan of fortification which has been partially carried out at Geneva, to the great amusement of the experts, who do not know the Council's secret purpose in putting through their magnificent enterprise. M. Micheli, who had been excluded from the fortification committee for having criticized the plan, had imagined that as a member of the Two Hundred, and even as a plain citizen, he was entitled to express his opinion at greater length; and that is what he had done in this pamphlet, which he had been imprudent enough to get printed. But he had not published it, for he had only had sufficient copies struck off to send to each of the Two Hundred. These, however, had been intercepted in the post by order of the Senate. I found this pamphlet among my uncle's papers together with the reply which he had been commissioned to prepare, and I took them both away. I had made this journey shortly after leaving the Survey office, and I had remained on good terms with the lawyer Coccoeli, who was its head. Some time afterwards, the Director of Customs conceived the idea of asking me to stand godfather to one of his children, and chose Mme Coccoeli as godmother. This honour turned my head and, in my pride at being so closely connected with the lawyer, I tried to prove myself worthy of my glory by cutting an important figure.

I could think of no better means of being impressive than to show him my copy of Micheli's printed pamphlet, which was indeed a rarity, and thus proving to him that I was connected with people of consequence in Geneva who knew state secrets. With a kind of partial reserve, however, which I should find it difficult to account for, I did not show him my uncle's reply to the pamphlet, perhaps because it was in manuscript; and nothing was good enough for M. Coccoeli that was not in print. He was so well aware, however, of the value of this document which I had been so stupid as to entrust to him that I never succeeded in recovering it from him, or saw it again. So, in the conviction that all efforts to get it back would be in vain I made a virtue of necessity and transformed the theft into a present. I do not for a moment doubt that, though the pamphlet was more curious than useful, he made good use of it at the Court of Turin, and took very good care to get himself reimbursed, in some way or another, for the outlay he might be supposed to have made on the purchase of it. Fortunately, of all future contingencies one of the least probable is that the King of Sardinia will lay siege to Geneva. But, since this is not absolutely impossible, I shall always reproach myself for my foolish

vanity in revealing the city's chief weaknesses to its oldest enemy.

I spent two or three years in this manner, with my interest divided between music and elixirs, plans and journeys; wandering incessantly from one thing to another; wanting to settle to something but not knowing to what, yet nevertheless being drawn gradually towards study; meeting men of letters, listening to literary talk, and even sometimes daring to take part in it myself; but rather assuming a bookish jargon than gaining any real knowledge of a book's contents. On my journeys to Geneva I paid a passing call from time to time on my good old friend M. Simon, who greatly fostered my budding ambition by giving me the latest news from the Republic of letters, which he drew from Baillet or Colomiés. Also at Chambéry I often saw a Jacobin who was professor of physics, a good-natured friar whose name I have forgotten, who frequently made small experiments that greatly amused me. Following his example, and with the assistance of Ozanam's *Mathematical Recreations*, I tried to make some sympathetic ink; to which purpose I more than half-filled a bottle with quicklime, sulphide of arsenic, and water, and corked it tightly. Almost instantaneously the effervescence began most violently. I ran to the bottle to uncork it, but I was not in time; it burst in my face like a bomb. I swallowed so much of the sulphide and lime that it almost killed me. I was blinded for six weeks, and in that way I learnt not to meddle in experimental physics without knowing the rudiments of that science.

This accident came at an awkward moment, since for some time my health had been sensibly deteriorating. I do not know how it was, but, though of a sound constitution and indulging in no sort of excesses, I was visibly on the decline. I am pretty well-built, my chest is broad and my lungs have room enough to expand. Nevertheless I was short of breath, felt constricted across the chest, gasped involuntarily, had palpitations and spat blood. On top of all this came a lingering fever which I have never entirely thrown off. How can a man fall into such a state in the flower of his youth, without any internal injury and having done nothing to destroy his health?

The sword wears out its sheath, as is sometimes said. That is my story. My passions have made me live, and my passions have killed me. What passions, it may be asked. Trifles, the most childish things in the world. Yet they affected me as much as if the possession of Helen, or of the throne of the Universe, had been at stake. In the first place, women. When I possessed one my senses were quiet, but my

heart never. At the height of my pleasure the need for love devoured me. I had a tender mother, a dear friend; but I needed a mistress. In my imagination I put one in Mamma's place, endowing her with a thousand shapes in order to deceive myself. If I had thought I was holding Mamma in my arms when I embraced her, my embraces would have been just as tender, but all my desires would have died. I should have sobbed with affection but I should have had no physical pleasure. Physical pleasure! Is it the lot of man to enjoy it? Ah, if ever in all my life I had once tasted the delights of love to the full, I do not think that my frail existence could have endured them; I should have died on the spot.

So I was burning with love for no object, and it is perhaps love of this sort that is the most exhausting. I was restless, worried by the bad state of my poor Mamma's affairs and by her reckless conduct, which could not fail to bring on her ruin within a short time. My cruel imagination, which always outleaps my misfortunes, repeatedly showed me the approaching tragedy in all its hideous extent and with all its consequences. I already saw myself forcibly separated by poverty from one to whom I had consecrated my life, and without whom I could not enjoy it. That is why my soul was always disturbed. I was devoured alternately by desires and by fears.

Music was another passion with me, less furious but no less consuming owing to the ardour with which I threw myself into it, owing to my persistent study of the obscure books of Rameau; owing to my invincible obstinacy in trying to commit them to my refractory memory; owing to my continual running about, and the immense compilations that I collected, very often spending whole nights on copying. But why dwell on my permanent passions, when all the foolish things that passed through my inconstant brain, fugitive desires that lasted only a day—a journey, a concert, a supper, a walk to take, a novel to read, a comedy to see, the most unpremeditated detail concerning my pleasures or my occupations—became so many violent passions, which in their ridiculous impetuosity caused me the most genuine torment? The imaginary misfortunes of Cleveland, which I read avidly and with frequent interruptions, caused me more distress, I believe, than my own.

There was a Genevese by the name of M. Bagueret who had been employed under Peter the Great at the Russian Court, one of the greatest rogues and the biggest fools I have ever met, always full of schemes as mad as himself, whose mind rained millions and who

thought nothing of extra ciphers. This man, who had come to Chambéry for some case before the Senate, seized hold of Mamma, as might have been expected, and in return for his ciphers, which he generously lavished upon her, drew her poor crowns from her, one by one. I did not like him at all, and he saw it – which is not difficult with me – and there was no sort of baseness he did not attempt in order to cajole me. He got the idea of proposing to teach me chess, which he could play a little. I tried almost against my will, and after I had more or less learnt the moves my progress was so rapid that before the end of our first sitting I could give him the rook which at first he had given me. That was enough; I was mad about chess from that moment. I bought a chess board, I bought a ‘Calabrian’;* I shut myself up in my room and spent days and nights endeavouring to learn all the games by heart, forcing them into my head, and playing by myself endlessly and without relaxation. After two or three months of this fine occupation and these inconceivable efforts I went to the café, thin, sallow, and almost stupefied. To try myself out, I played against M. Bagueret again; he beat me once, twice, twenty times. So many combinations were mixed up in my head and my brain was so dull that I seemed to have nothing but a cloud before my eyes. Every time I have tried to practise by studying games with Philidor’s book or Stamma’s the same thing has happened to me; I have completely worn myself out and found my play weaker than before. For the rest, whether I have given up chess for a time or kept myself in practice by playing, I have never improved a jot since that first sitting; I have always found myself just where I was when I got up from it. I might practise for thousands of centuries, and at the end I should be capable of giving Bagueret his rook, but that is all. Time well spent, do you think? And I spent quite a little time like that. I did not give up my first attempt until I had no more strength to continue it. When I left my room and put in an appearance, I looked as I had been snatched from the dead, and if I had gone on in that way I should not have remained alive for long. Anyone can see how difficult it would be, especially in the ardour of youth, for such a mind to allow of the body’s enjoying continuous good health. My physical deterioration reacted on my disposition, and moderated the ardour of my manias. As I felt myself grow weaker I became calmer, and somewhat relaxed my furious travelling. Being more sedentary, I was

* A book on chess by the Italian chess player Gioacchino Greco, called the Calabrian.

attacked not by boredom but by melancholy; my languor turned to sadness. I wept and sighed for no reason. I felt life escaping me untasted. I groaned at the state in which I should leave my poor Mamma, and at that into which I saw her about to fall. Indeed I can affirm that my sole regret was that I should see Mamma no more, and should leave her in so pitiful a condition. Finally I fell seriously ill. She tended me as never mother tended her child, and that was to her advantage, for it diverted her from her schemes and kept the promoters at bay. How sweet would death have been if it had come then! If I had tasted few of the good things of life, I had known few of its evils. My soul would have departed in peace without the cruel consciousness of man's injustice, which poisons life and death alike. I should have had the consolation of surviving in the better part of myself. It would hardly have been death at all. But for the uneasiness I felt concerning her fate I should have died as if I were falling asleep; and even this uneasiness was for a beloved and tender object, which tempered its bitterness. 'My whole being is in your hands,' I said to her; 'act so that it may be happy.' Two or three times, when my illness was at its height, I got up during the night and dragged myself into her room to give her advice about some action, which I may say was thoroughly correct and sensible, but which chiefly displayed my concern for her future. And if tears had been my food and my medicine, I derived strength from those I shed with her, sitting on her bed beside her and holding her hands in mine. In these nocturnal conversations the hours slipped by, and I went back in a better state than when I had come. Contented and calmed by the promises she had made me, and by the hopes she had given me, I went straight off to sleep with peace in my heart and resigned to the will of Providence. God grant that, after so many occasions for hating life, after all the storms that have shaken my existence and made it no more than a burden to me, the death which ends my days shall be no more cruel to me than it would have been at that moment!

By her care, her vigilance, and her infinite exertions she saved me; and it is certain that only she could have done so. I have very little faith in doctors' medicine, but a great deal in that of true friends; actions on which one's happiness depends are always done better than any others. If there is such a thing in life as a sensation of delight, we felt it on being restored to one another. Our mutual affection did not increase; that was impossible. But it took on an indefinitely closer intimacy, the more affecting for its great simplicity. I became entirely

her concern, entirely her child, and more so than if she had been my real mother. We began imperceptibly to become inseparable and, in a sense, to share our whole existence in common. Feeling that we were not only necessary but sufficient to one another, we grew accustomed to thinking of nothing outside ourselves, completely to confine our happiness and our desires to our possession of one another, which was perhaps unique among human kind. For it was not, as I have said, a love relationship, but a more real possession, dependent not on the senses, on sex, age, or personal beauty, but on everything by which one is oneself, and which one cannot lose except by ceasing to be.

How was it that this pleasurable crisis did not bring happiness to the rest of her days and to mine? The fault was not mine, I can console myself with that conviction. It was not hers either; at least it was not wilfully so. It was decreed that soon the invincible nature of things should reassert its sway. But this fatal reversion did not take place immediately. There was, Heaven be praised, an interval, a short and precious interval, which did not end through any fault of mine, and which I need not reproach myself for having made poor use of.

Although recovered from my serious illness, I had not regained my strength. My chest was not sound, and some traces of fever still remained, which made me languid. I had no desire left for anything but to end my days near that person who was dear to me, to keep her to her good resolutions, to show her where the real charm of happiness was to be found, and to make her life happy, in so far as it depended upon me. But I saw, and felt also, that the continual solitude of life together in a dark and melancholy house would finally become melancholy too. The remedy for this presented itself of its own accord. Mamma had prescribed milk for me, and wanted me to go and take it in the country. I agreed, provided that she came with me. That was enough to decide her; all that remained was to choose the place. The garden in the suburb was not properly in the country; being shut in by houses and other gardens, it lacked the attractions of a country retreat. Besides, after Anet's death, we had given it up for reasons of economy, having no longer any desire to raise plants; and other considerations had intervened to lessen our regret for its loss.

Profiting now by the dislike which I found she felt for the town, I suggested that we should leave it altogether and establish ourselves in a pleasant solitude, in some little house far enough away to throw importunate visitors off the scent. She might have consented, and this move, the prompting of her good angel and mine, would in all

probability have ensured us a happy and peaceful existence up to the moment of our separation by death. But it was not to that state that we were called. After spending a life of plenty, Mamma was fated to experience all the miseries of want and discomfort, in order that she might leave the world with less regret; and I, by a concatenation of every sort of evil, was doomed one day to be an example to all who, solely out of a love for justice and the public good, and strong in their innocence alone, might dare openly to speak the truth to men, without relying on cabals or forming parties to protect themselves.

She was deterred by an unfortunate fear. She had not the courage to leave her wretched house, through fear of offending its owner. 'Your idea of a retreat is delightful,' she said to me, 'and much to my taste; but in that retreat one must live. In leaving my prison, I take the risk of losing my bread; and when this gives out and we are in the woods, we shall return to the town to look for more. To minimize that risk, let us not quit the town entirely. Let us pay our little pension to the Count de Saint-Laurent so that he shall leave me mine; and look for some retreat far enough away for us to live in peace, and near enough for us to return at any time it may be necessary.' That is what we did. After looking around a little, we settled at Les Charmettes, an estate belonging to M. de Conzié, just outside Chambéry, but as retired and solitary as if it had been three hundred miles away. Between two fairly high hills lies a little valley running north and south, down which a stream trickles over pebbles and under trees. Along this valley, half way up the hill, are some scattered houses, very attractive to anyone liking a sanctuary somewhat wild and aloof. After having tried two or three of these houses, we finally chose the prettiest, which belonged to a gentleman in the army, M. Noiret by name. The house was very habitable. In front was a terraced garden; above it a vineyard, below it an orchard, facing it was a little chestnut plantation, close by was a spring, and higher up the mountain were meadows for grazing cattle. In fact here was everything that was necessary for the little country household we wished to set up. So far as I can remember dates and seasons, we took possession towards the end of the summer of 1736.* The first night we slept there I was enraptured. 'Oh, Mamma,' I said to that dear friend, as I embraced her, at the same time breaking into tears of tenderness and joy, 'In this spot true happiness and innocence dwell. If we do not find both of them here, it will be no good looking for them anywhere else.'

[* Rousseau is mistaken. The lease of Les Charmettes was not taken till 1738.]

BOOK SIX

1738

Hoc erat in votis: modus agri non ita magnus,
Hortus ubi, et tecto vicinus jugis aquae fons;
Et paulum silvae super his foret . . .*

I cannot add:

Auctius atque
Dis melius fecere;†

But no matter; I needed nothing more, I did not even need the property. The enjoyment was enough for me. For a long time now I have said and felt that it is not only in the case of husbands and lovers that the owner and the possessor are so often two very different persons.

Here begins the short period of my life's happiness; here I come to those peaceful but transient moments that have given me the right to say I have lived. Precious and ever-regretted moments, begin to run your charming course again for me! Flow one after another through my memory, more slowly, if you can, than you did in your fugitive reality! What shall I do to prolong this touching and simple tale, as I should like to; endlessly to repeat the same words, and no more to weary my readers by their repetition than I should weary myself by beginning them for ever afresh? Indeed if it all consisted of facts, deeds, and words, I could describe it and in a sense convey its meaning. But how can I tell what was neither said, nor done, nor even thought, but only relished and felt, when I cannot adduce any other cause for my happiness but just this feeling? I rose with the sun, and I was happy; I went for walks, and I was happy; I saw Mamma, and I was happy; I left her, and I was happy; I strolled through the woods and over the hills, I wandered in the valleys, I read, I lazed, I worked in the garden, I picked the fruit, I helped in the household, and happiness followed me everywhere; it lay in no definable object, it was entirely within me; it would not leave me for a single moment.

Nothing that happened to me during that delightful time, nothing that I did, said, or thought all the while it lasted, has slipped from my

* This used to be my prayer: a moderate-sized piece of land, with a garden, a spring near the house, and a small wood besides.

† The gods have blest me with more than I desire (Horace, *Satires*, II, No. 6).

memory. The periods preceding it and following it recur to me at intervals; I recall them irregularly and confusedly; but I recall that time in its entirety, as if it existed still. My imagination, which in my youth always looked forward but now looks back, compensates me with these sweet memories for the hope I have lost for ever. I no longer see anything in the future to attract me; only a return into the past can please me, and these vivid and precise returns into the period of which I am speaking often give me moments of happiness in spite of my misfortunes.

I will present a single example of these memories, which will give some idea of their strength and precision. The first day we went out to sleep at Les Charmettes Mamma was in a sedan-chair, and I followed on foot. The road climbed; she was rather heavy and, being afraid of over-tiring her porters, she insisted on getting out at about half-way and completing the journey on foot. As she walked she saw something blue in the hedge, and said to me: 'Look! There are some periwinkle still in flower.' I had never seen a periwinkle, I did not stoop to examine it, and I am too short-sighted to distinguish plants on the ground without doing so. I merely gave it a passing glance, and nearly thirty years elapsed before I saw any periwinkle again, or at least before I noticed any. In 1764, when I was at Cressier with my friend M. du Peyrou, we were climbing a hill, on the top of which he has built a pretty little look-out which he rightly calls *Belle Vue*. I was then beginning to botanize a little and, as I climbed and looked among the bushes, I gave a shout of joy: 'Look, there are some periwinkle!', as in fact there were. Du Peyrou noticed my delight, but he did not know its cause; he will learn it, I hope, when one day he reads this. The reader can judge by the effect on me of something so small, the degree to which I have been moved by everything which relates to that stage in my life.

However, the country air did not restore me to my former state of health. I was languid, and became more so. I could not endure the milk, and had to give it up. The water cure was then fashionable for all complaints; I resorted to that, and so immoderately that it almost put an end not to my illness but to my life. Every morning when I got up I went to the spring with a large goblet, and as I walked about I drank the equivalent of two bottles full on end. I altogether gave up wine with my meals. The water I drank was rather hard and, like most mountain waters, difficult to pass. I managed, indeed, in less than two months totally to ruin my stomach, which had been excel-

lent up till then. No longer able to digest my food, I realized that there was no more hope of a cure. At that same time there occurred an event as strange in itself as in its consequences, which will be with me for so long as I live.

One morning, on which I was no more ill than usual, I was putting a little table upon its legs when I felt a sudden, almost inconceivable disturbance throughout my whole body. I cannot describe it better than as a kind of storm which started in my blood and instantly took control of all my limbs. My arteries began to throb so powerfully that not only did I feel their beating but I even heard it, especially that of the carotids. This was accompanied by a great noise in my ears of three or four different kinds: a dull, heavy buzzing, a sharper note as of running water, a very shrill whistling and the throbbing I have described, the pulsations of which I could easily count without feeling my pulse or touching my body with my hands. This internal noise was so loud that it robbed me of the fine ear I had once possessed, making me not completely deaf but hard of hearing, as I have been to this day.

My surprise and alarm may be imagined. I thought I was dying; I took to my bed; the doctor was called; tremblingly I told him my case, which I considered to be past cure. I think that he thought the same. However, he performed his office, stringing together some long explanations of which I could not understand a word. Then, following on his sublime theory, he began *in anima vili* the experimental cure which it pleased him to attempt. It was so painful, so disgusting, and so ineffective that I soon wearied of it; and at the end of several weeks, seeing that I was neither better nor worse, I got up from bed and resumed my ordinary life, with my throbbing arteries and my buzzings in the head, which have not left me for a minute since that time, that is to say for the last thirty years.

I had been a fine sleeper up to then. The total sleeplessness which accompanied these symptoms, and which has constantly done so to the present day, finally convinced me that I had not long to live. This conviction temporarily suspended my endeavours to find a cure. Being unable to prolong my life, I decided to make the best possible use of so much of it as remained; which I was enabled to do, thanks to a special favour of Nature which, in my sad state, exempted me from the pain that I might have expected. I was bothered by this noise, but it was not painful; it was accompanied by no other inconvenience but insomnia at nights and a perpetual shortness of breath, not amounting

to asthma, which I only noticed when I tried to run or to attempt any degree of exertion.

This accident, which might have killed me altogether, only extinguished my passions; and I thank Heaven every day for this beneficial effect which it had on my soul. I can well say that I did not begin to live until I looked on myself as a dead man. Estimating the things I was about to leave behind me at their true value, I began to concern myself with nobler preoccupations, as if in anticipation of the duties I should soon have to fulfil and which I had seriously neglected till then. I had frequently made fun of religion in my own way, but I had never been totally without it. So it was less difficult for me to revert to a subject which many people find so melancholy, but which is sweet to anyone who finds in it a source of hope and consolation. Mamma was more helpful to me in this respect than all the theologians in the world could have been.

Since she always reduced things to a system, she had not failed to treat religion in this way, and her system was made up of the most ill-assorted ideas, some of them extremely sensible, and others most foolish, of feelings that were the product of her character and of prejudices derived from her education. Believers in general create God in their own image; the good make Him good, the evil, evil; fanatics, being full of hatred and bile, can see only Hell, because they wish to damn the whole world, while gentle, loving souls hardly believe in such a place. I can scarcely get over my astonishment at finding the good Fénelon speak of it in his *Telemachus* as if he really believed in it. But I hope that he was lying at the time; for after all, however truthful a man may be, he must lie sometimes if he is a bishop. Mamma did not lie to me. Being a creature free from gall, she could not imagine a vindictive and ever-wrathful deity; where fanatics see justice and punishment she saw only mercy and pity. Often she would say that there would be no justice in God if he were to be strictly just towards us. For since he has not made us such as to be good he would then be requiring of us more than he has given. The queer thing was that though she did not believe in Hell she believed in purgatory. This arose from the fact that she did not know what to do about the souls of the wicked, being equally incapable of damning them and of putting them with the good until they become so themselves; and it must be admitted that the wicked are always a considerable embarrassment, in this world and in the next.

Another queer thing. Her system clearly destroyed the whole doc-

trine of original sin and redemption, and shook the complete basis of common Christianity, so that Catholicism, at any rate, could not subsist with it. Yet Mamma was a good Catholic, or claimed to be, and it is clear that her claim was made in very good faith. In her opinion the Scriptures were too literally and too severely interpreted. All that is written there about eternal torments was in her opinion to be interpreted as a warning, or in a figurative sense. The death of Jesus Christ seemed to her an example of truly divine charity, to teach men to love God and to love one another. In brief, she was true to the faith she had embraced, and sincerely accepted its whole creed; but when it came to the discussion of each separate article, it turned out that her belief was quite different from the Church's, though she always submitted to its authority. In such matters she displayed a simplicity of heart and a candour which were more eloquent than any arguments and which frequently embarrassed even her confessor, from whom she kept nothing. 'I am a good Catholic,' she would say to him, 'and wish always to be one. I accept the decisions of our Holy Mother Church with all the strength of my heart. I am not mistress of my faith, but I am mistress of my will, which I unreservedly submit. I endeavour to believe everything. What more can you ask of me?'

If Christian morality had not existed, I think that she would have followed its principles, so completely did it coincide with her character. She did all that was prescribed; but she would have done it all the same if it had not been prescribed. In unimportant matters she loved to obey; and if she had not been allowed, or even required, to eat meat on fast days, she would have fasted in private and to please God, without paying the least regard to considerations of prudence. But her whole morality was subordinated to M. de Tavel's principles; or rather she claimed to find nothing contradictory to it in them. She could have slept with twenty men every day with a clear conscience, and with no more scruple about it than desire. I know that plenty of religious people are no more scrupulous on this point, but the difference is that they are led away by their passions, and she only by her sophistry. During the most moving – I could even say the most edifying – conversation she could allude to this subject without any change in her voice or manner, or any thought of being self-contradictory. She could even interrupt her talk, if need be, for the act itself, and then resume it with the same serenity as before: so absolute was her conviction that the whole question was no more than one of social

convention which every intelligent person was at liberty to interpret, apply, or reject, without reference to anything else and without the least danger of offending God. Although I was certainly not of her opinion on this point, I confess that I had not the courage to dispute it, out of shame for the ungallant role I should have had to assume in order to do so. I might have tried to establish a rule for others, whilst trying to secure exemption for myself. But not only was her temperament a sufficient protection against the abuse of her principles, I knew also that she was not a woman to be deceived, and that to obtain an exemption for myself was to establish one for any man who might please her. I merely mention this in passing, along with the rest of her inconsistencies, although it had very little effect on her conduct – at that time none at all; but I have promised to give a faithful account of her principles, and I wish to keep my word. I will return now to myself.

Finding in her all the principles I needed to fortify my soul against the terror of death and its aftermath, I drew with security on this source of confidence. I became more closely attached to her than ever before; and would gladly have handed my whole life over to her, now that I felt it about to leave me. From this redoubled attachment to her, from the conviction that I had not long to live and from my profound confidence in my future fate, arose an habitual state of tranquillity, of sensual enjoyment even, which in allaying all those passions that banish our hopes and fears to a distance, left me to the untroubled, unapprehensive enjoyment of the few days that remained to me. One thing contributed towards making them more pleasant; and that was my endeavour to foster her taste for the country by means of every amusement I could devise. By making her love her garden, her chicken-yard, her pigeons, and her cows, I came to grow fond of them all myself; and these little occupations, which filled my day without disturbing my tranquillity, were more valuable to me than the milk and all the other remedies which were to preserve my poor frame and restore it, in so far as that was possible.

The grape harvest and the fruit gathering amused us for the rest of that year, and made us grow fonder and fonder of country life among the good people by whom we were surrounded. We were very sorry to see the approach of winter, and returned to the town as if into exile – especially I, who did not expect to see another spring, and thought that I was taking a final leave of *Les Charmettes*. I did not depart without kissing the earth and the trees, and turning back again

and again as we went away. Having long ago given up my girl pupils and lost my taste for the amusements and society of the town, I saw no one except Mamma and M. Salomon, who had recently become her doctor and mine. He was a decent man, an intelligent man and a great Cartesian, who talked tolerably well about the workings of the world; in fact, his pleasant and instructive conversation did me more good than all his prescriptions. I have never been able to endure the silly nonsense with which ordinary conversation is padded out; but useful and serious talk has always given me great pleasure, and I have never refused to take part in it. I was very fond of M. Salomon's; for I seemed in his company to be enjoying a foretaste of that higher knowledge which my soul would acquire, once free from its earthly trammels. My liking for him extended to the subjects he discussed, and I began to look for books which would help me to understand them better. Those which combined devotion and the sciences suited me best; especially those of the Oratory and Port-Royal,* which I began to read or rather to devour. One fell into my hands entitled *Conversations on the Sciences* by Father Lamy, which was a sort of introduction to the subjects treated in such books. I read it and re-read it a hundred times, and finally felt myself drawn little by little, despite my condition – or rather because of it – by some irresistible force towards study; and whilst I looked on every day as my last I studied as ardently as if I were likely to live for ever. They said that this did me harm. I think, myself, that it did me good, and good not only to my soul but to my body. For my reading, which was a passion with me, became so delightful to me that I thought no more of my ills and was much less afflicted by them. It is true, nevertheless, that nothing gave me real relief; but suffering no acute pain, I grew used to languishing, to not sleeping, to thinking instead of acting, and finally, to looking on the gradual and slow decay of my frame as an inevitable progress that could only be halted by death.

These thoughts not only freed me from all the vain cares of life, but they delivered me from all those tiresome remedies which had been inflicted on me in spite of myself. Salomon was convinced that his drugs could not save me, and so spared me the unpleasantness of taking them, and was content to soothe poor Mamma's grief by a few of those harmless prescriptions which give the sick man false hopes and maintain the doctor's reputation. I gave up my strict diet; I began to drink wine again, and to resume the habits of a healthy man in so

[* The Jansenist centre.]

far as my strength would allow. I was moderate in everything, but abstained from nothing. I even went out and began to see my acquaintances again, particularly M. de Conzié, whose company greatly pleased me. In fact, whether because it seemed a fine thing to keep on learning to my last hour, or because some slight hope of life remained at the bottom of my heart, the expectation of death, far from diminishing my taste for study, seemed to stimulate it, and I hastened to collect a little knowledge for the next world, as if in the conviction that I should find no more there than I brought with me. I became very fond of M. Bouchard's bookshop, which was frequented by certain men of letters; and when that spring drew near, which I had expected never to see again, I looked out a few books for *Les Charmettes*, in case I should be so lucky as to return there.

I was so lucky, and I took every possible advantage of my good fortune. The joy with which I saw the first buds is beyond description. Watching the spring again was like a resurrection into paradise. No sooner did the snows begin to melt than we left our dungeon, and returned to *Les Charmettes* in time for the first notes of the nightingale. From that moment I no longer thought I was dying; and it is really most peculiar, but I have never had any serious illness in the country. I have often been in pain there, but never confined to my bed. Often I have said, when I have felt less well than usual, 'When you see me at the point of death, carry me into the shade of an oak, and I promise you I shall recover.'

Although I was weak I resumed my rural occupations, but to an extent proportionate to my strength. I was really upset not to be able to manage the garden on my own. But after digging half a dozen spadefuls of earth I was out of breath, dripping with sweat, and could do no more. When I stopped, my palpitations increased and the blood flew so violently to my head that I had to stand up again immediately. Being forced to confine myself to less exhausting jobs, I undertook, amongst other things, the care of the pigeon-house, of which I became so fond that I often spent several hours on end there without a moment of boredom. Pigeons are very shy and hard to tame; yet I succeeded in inspiring mine with such confidence that they followed me everywhere and let me catch them whenever I wanted to. I could not come out into the garden or the yard without two or three immediately perching on my arms or my head; and finally, despite the joy I took in them, my followers became so tiresome to me that I was obliged to break them of their familiarity. I have always

taken particular pleasure in taming animals, particularly timid and wild ones. I found it delightful to inspire them with a confidence which I have never abused; I wanted them to love me and yet be quite free.

I have said that I brought some books; and of these I made use, though in a manner more exhausting than instructive. My illusions about the world caused me to think that in order to benefit by my reading I ought to possess all the knowledge the book presupposed. I was very far indeed from imagining that often the author did not possess it himself, but had extracted it from other books, as and when he needed it. This foolish conviction forced me to stop every moment, and to rush incessantly from one book to another; sometimes before coming to the tenth page of the one I was trying to read I should, by this extravagant method, have had to run through whole libraries. Nevertheless I stuck to it so persistently that I wasted infinite time, and my head became so confused that I could hardly see or take in anything. Luckily I saw that I was on a false track which was leading me into an immense labyrinth, and abandoned it before getting quite lost.

If one has any taste for learning, however slight, the first thing one feels in applying oneself to it is the interconnexion of the sciences, which causes them to attract, help, and throw light one on another, so that none is independent of the rest. Although the human mind is too weak to grasp them all and must always select one as its prime interest, unless a man has some notion of the others he is often in the dark in his own. I felt that what I had undertaken was good and useful in itself, only that my method ought to be changed. For a start I took the Encyclopaedia and began dividing it according to subjects. But soon I saw that I had to do quite the opposite, to take each subject separately and pursue it on its own up to the point where they all joined. Thus I came back to the common synthesis, but I came back to it as a man who knows what he is doing. Now meditation supplied the place of knowledge, and a natural reflectiveness helped to guide me on the way. Whether I lived or died I had no time to lose. To know nothing at nearly twenty-five, and to wish to know everything, entailed making the very best use of my days. Not knowing at what point fate or death might put an end to my endeavours, I decided, come what might, to get some idea about every subject, for the purpose not only of discovering my natural abilities but of deciding which was the best brand of knowledge to pursue.

In the execution of this plan I found another advantage which I had

not expected: I made the best possible use of a great deal of time. I cannot have been born to study, for continuous application so wearies me that I am utterly unable to devote half an hour on end to a single subject, especially when following someone else's train of thought; though sometimes I have been able to attend longer to my own, and even with a fair measure of success. When I have followed an author who requires concentrated reading for a few pages my mind forsakes him and loses itself in the clouds. If I persist I exhaust myself to no purpose; I become dazed and cease to see anything. But if I take different subjects in succession, even without any pause, one refreshes me from the fatigue of the other, and I feel no need for relaxation but follow them all with greater ease. I benefited by this observation in framing my plan of studies, and varied them in such a manner that I was busy all day and never tired. It is true that my duties in the garden and the house made useful diversions. But, as my eagerness grew, I soon found means of contriving more time for reading, and of doing two things at once, without noticing that both were done worse as a result.

Although I am recounting all these trivial details which have such a charm for me, but which must often weary my reader, I am nevertheless exercising a certain restraint which he might hardly suspect if I did not take care to call his attention to it. Here, for instance, I remember with delight all the various attempts I made to apportion my time in such a way as to derive the greatest possible pleasure and profit from it. And I can say that never in all my life was I so seldom idle or bored as at this period when I was living in retirement and in continuous ill-health. Two or three months were thus employed in testing the bent of my mind and in enjoying the charm of life, at the loveliest season of the year and in a spot which that season made delightful. But not only did I enjoy the charm of life, the value of which I felt so deeply, but also the charm of unrestrained and sweet society – if such a name should be given to a union so perfect – and of the wonderful knowledge I was setting out to acquire. For it seemed to me as if I already possessed it, or rather things were still better than that since the pleasure of learning played a great part in my happiness.

I must pass over these experiments, which were all delights to me but which are too simple to be capable of description. Indeed, true happiness is quite indescribable; it can only be felt, and the stronger the feeling the less it can be described, because it is not the result of a

collection of facts but a permanent state. I often repeat myself, but I should do so still more were I to revert to this same subject as often as it comes into my mind. When finally my most variable way of life assumed some uniformity, my day was divided in more or less this fashion.

I got up every morning before sunrise and climbed through a near-by orchard on to a road above the vineyard which ran along the hill as far as Chambéry. As I walked up there I said my prayers, which did not consist merely of a vain motion of the lips but of a sincere raising of the heart towards the Creator of that beauteous Nature whose charms lay beneath my eyes. I have never liked to pray in a room; walls and all the little works of man come between myself and God. I love to contemplate Him in His works, while my heart uplifts itself to Him. I venture to say that my prayers were pure, and for that reason deserved to be heard. For myself and for her whom I always remembered in them, I asked no more than an innocent and peaceful life, free from all wickedness, grief, and distressing want, and that we should die the death of the just, and share their fate in the hereafter. For the rest my worship consisted rather of wonder and contemplation than of petitionary prayer. For I knew that the best means of obtaining from the Dispenser of all benefits those benefits that are necessary to us was to deserve them and not ask for them. I returned by a fairly roundabout way, contemplating as I walked, with both interest and pleasure, the country scene all around me, the only one of which the eye and the heart never tire. From a distance I looked to see if it was day yet with Mamma, and if her shutters were open I started with joy and ran to her. If they were shut I went into the garden and amused myself till she woke up, by going over what I had learnt the evening before or by gardening. The shutters opened, and I went to kiss her in bed, often still half asleep; and that kiss, as pure as it was tender, derived a charm from its very innocence that is never present in the delights of the senses.

We usually breakfasted on white coffee, and had more leisure then than at any other hour of the day. We would sit and chat at our ease, generally spending rather long at the table, and from that time I have had a great liking for breakfast, infinitely preferring the fashion in England and Switzerland, where breakfast is really a meal attended by all the family, to the French custom whereby everyone breakfasts alone in his room, or more often does not breakfast at all. After an hour or two of chat, I went to my books until dinner. I began with

some philosophical work such as the Logic of Port-Royal, Locke's Essay, Malebranche, Leibnitz, or Descartes. I soon observed that all these authors were almost perpetually at variance with one another, and I conceived the fanciful notion of reconciling them, which cost me much labour and waste of time. I muddled my head, and made not the least progress. Finally I gave up this plan, and adopted an infinitely better one, to which I attribute all the progress that I may have made, notwithstanding my lack of talents – for there is no doubt that I never possessed much capacity for study. As I read each author, I made a rule of adopting and following all his ideas without adding on any of my own or of anyone else's, and without ever arguing with him. 'Let us begin', I said to myself, 'by collecting a store of ideas, true and false but all of them clear, until my mind is sufficiently equipped to be able to compare them and choose between them.' This method is not without its drawbacks, I know; but it helped in attaining my object of self-tuition. After I had spent some years never thinking independently, but always following the thoughts of others, unreflectively, so to speak, and almost without reasoning, I found myself equipped with a great enough fund of learning to be self-sufficient and to think without the help of another. Then when travelling and business made it impossible for me to consult books I amused myself by going over and comparing what I had read, by weighing everything on the scales of reason, and by sometimes passing judgement on my masters. I did not find that my critical faculty had lost its vigour through my having begun to use it so late; and when I published my own ideas I was not accused of being a servile disciple, or of swearing *in verba magistri*.*

I went on from there to elementary geometry, beyond which I never advanced, but persistently tried to conquer my wretched memory by retracing my steps countless times, and by incessantly going over the same ground. I did not like Euclid, who is more concerned with a series of proofs than with a chain of ideas; I preferred the geometry of Father Lamy, who from that time became one of my favourite authors, and whose works I still re-read with pleasure. When I was more advanced I took up Father Reynaud's *Science of Calculation*, and then his *Analysis Demonstrated*, which I only managed to skim. I have never been sufficiently advanced really to understand the application of algebra to geometry. I disliked that way of working without

[* 'By the words of the master', an allusion to the disciples of Pythagoras, who exactly preserved their master's teaching.]

seeing what one is doing; solving a geometrical problem by equations seemed to me like playing a tune by turning a handle. The first time I found by calculation that the square of a binomial figure was composed of the square of each of its parts added to twice the product of one by the other, despite the fact that my multiplication was right I was unable to trust it until I had drawn the figure on paper. It was not that I had not a great liking for algebra, considered as an abstract subject; but when it was applied to the measuring of space, I wanted to see the operation in graphic form; otherwise I could not understand it at all.

After that came Latin. That was my most painful task, and I have never made much progress with it. At first I began learning by the Port-Royal method, but without result. The barbarous verses disgusted me, and I could not get them into my head. I got lost among that crowd of rules, and when I learned the last forgot everything that had gone before. The study of words is not the right thing for a man without a memory, and it was precisely in order to force my memory to improve that I persisted in studying Latin, though in the end I had to give it up. I knew sufficient of the construction, however, to be able to read an easy author with the help of the dictionary. I persisted in doing this, and succeeded fairly well. I applied myself to translations, not on paper but in my head, and stopped there. After much time and practice, I succeeded in reading Latin authors fluently enough, but never in speaking or writing in the language, which has put me into difficulties when I have found myself, for some reason or other, numbered among the men of letters. Another drawback arising from this method of learning is that I have never understood prosody, still less the rules of versification. Wishing, however, to appreciate the harmony of the language in verse as well as in prose I have tried hard to do so, but I am convinced that without a master it is almost impossible. Having learnt the structure of the easiest of all the verses, which is the hexameter, I had the patience to scan almost the whole of Virgil, marking the feet and the quantities. Then when I was in doubt whether a syllable was long or short I referred to my Virgil. This led me into many errors, as can be imagined, on account of the variations allowed by the rules of prosody. For if there is one advantage in being one's own teacher, there are also great disadvantages, the chief of which is the incredible labour involved. I know that better than any-one else.

Before noon I left my books and, if dinner was not ready, went to

visit my friends the pigeons, or to work in the garden until it was. When I was called I hurried gladly to table with a huge appetite. For another remarkable thing is that, however ill I may be, my appetite never fails me. We dined very pleasantly, talking of our affairs, until Mamma was able to eat. Two or three times a week, when the weather was fine, we went and took our coffee in a cool and shady arbour at the back of the house, which I had decorated with hops, and which we very much enjoyed during the heat. We spent quite a little time out there, inspecting our vegetables and our flowers, and discussing matters relative to our way of life – which made us more conscious of its pleasures. At the bottom of the garden I had another small family: the bees. I never failed to pay them a visit, and sometimes Mamma came with me. I was greatly interested in their labours, and was vastly amused to see them returning from their foraging with their small thighs sometimes so loaded that they could hardly move. In the early days my curiosity made me too curious; and two or three times I got stung. But soon we came to know one another so well that however close I came they let me alone; and however full their hives were when they were ready to swarm, though sometimes I might have them all round me, on my hand and on my face, none of them would ever sting me. All creatures rightly distrust man; but once they are sure that he does not mean to harm them, their confidence becomes so great that one must be worse than a barbarian to abuse it.

I returned to my books, but my afternoon occupations might better be described as recreation and amusement than serious study. I have never been able to endure working at the desk after my dinner and, in general, any effort tries me during the heat of the day.

Nevertheless, I busied myself in reading, without studying, working to no rule and almost without a system. The subjects I pursued with most regularity were history and geography; and as they demanded no great concentration I made as much progress in them as my faulty memory allowed. I tried to study Father Pétau, and immersed myself in the obscurities of chronology; but I was repelled by its critical side, which seems to be quite limitless, and preferred to apply myself to the exact measurements of time and to the motions of the heavenly bodies. I might have got quite a liking for astronomy if I had possessed any instruments. But I had to be content with some rudiments taken from books, and a few crude observations made with a telescope, merely to learn the general features of the heavens; for I am too short-sighted to be able to distinguish the stars clearly with the

naked eye. I remember one astronomical adventure the thought of which has often made me laugh. I had bought a chart of the heavens in order to study the constellations. This I had fastened to a frame, and on nights when the sky was clear I used to go out in the garden, and put the frame up on four legs of about my own height with the chart turned downwards. The candle to light it I put in a bucket between the four legs, so that the wind should not blow it out. Then looking alternately at the chart with my naked eye and at the sky through the telescope, I practised recognizing the individual stars and making out the constellations. I think I have said that M. Noiret's was a terraced garden; everything that was done there could be seen from the road. One evening some peasants passing rather late saw me, in grotesque clothes, busy at this work. The light falling on my chart, the source of which they could not see because the candle was hidden by the rim of the bucket, those four posts, the great sheet of paper scrawled with figures, the frame, and the movements of my telescope, which kept appearing and disappearing, gave the whole proceeding an air of sorcery, which terrified them. My clothing was not calculated to reassure them. A flapping hat on top of my cap, and a short padded dressing-gown of Mamma's, which she had compelled me to put on, presented to their eyes the true picture of a sorcerer; and as it was nearly midnight they had no doubt that a sabbath was about to begin. Feeling little curiosity to see more, they rushed off in great alarm, and woke their neighbours to tell them of the apparition; and so quickly did the story circulate that next day everyone in the neighbourhood knew how a sabbath had been held at M. Noiret's. I do not know what this rumour would finally have led to if one of the peasants who had seen my conjurations had not that day carried his complaint to two Jesuits, who used to visit us and who disabused their minds on the spot, although they did not know what it was all about. They told us the story; I gave them the explanation, and we laughed a great deal. However it was decided that, through fear of a repetition, I should henceforth take my observations without a candle, and go indoors to consult my chart of the heavens. Those who have read of my magic in Venice, in my *Letters from the Mountain*,* will realize, I am sure, that I had a long-standing vocation for sorcery.

Such was my way of life at Les Charmettes when I was not busy with country pursuits. For they always had the preference, and in so far as my strength would allow I worked like a peasant. It is true,

* *Lettres de la montagne.*

however, that under this head my extreme weakness allowed me little more than the merit of good intentions. Besides, I was trying to do two jobs at once, and for that reason did neither of them well. I had made the resolve deliberately to improve my memory, and persisted in trying to learn a great deal by heart. For that purpose I always carried some book with me, which I took incredible pains to study and repeat to myself as I worked. I do not know how it was that my persistence in these vain and continuous efforts did not end by reducing me to stupidity. I must have learnt and relearnt Virgil's *Eclogues* a good twenty times, but I do not know a single word of them. I have lost or dismembered quantities of books owing to my habit of carrying them everywhere with me, to the pigeon-house, the garden, the orchard, and the vineyard. When I was otherwise employed, I put my book down at the foot of the tree or on the hedge, and always forgot to pick it up again. Often after a fortnight I would find it rotted, or eaten by ants or slugs. This ardour for learning became a mania which reduced me almost to stupidity, so incessantly was I busy muttering something through my teeth.

The writings of Port-Royal and the Oratory, being my most frequent reading, had made me half a Jansenist, and sometimes, for all my trust in God, I was really frightened by their harsh theology. The fear of Hell, which had bothered me very little before, gradually disturbed my ease of mind; and if Mamma had not calmed my troubled spirit, that terrible doctrine would finally have upset me altogether. My confessor, who was also hers, helped likewise to keep me in a calm state of mind. He was Father Hemet,* a good and sensible old Jesuit, whose memory I shall always respect. Although of that order, he had the simplicity of a child; and his moral standpoint, which was gentle rather than lax, was just what I needed to counterbalance the melancholy effect of Jansenism. This kind man and his colleague Father Coppiert† often came to see us at Les Charmettes, although the road was very rough and somewhat long for men of their years. Their visits did me a great deal of good. May God reward their souls for it! For they were too old then for me to suppose that they are still alive. I used also to visit them at Chambéry, and gradually became quite at home in their house; their library was at my disposal. So intimately is my memory of that happy time linked with my recollections

[* He died in 1738, and cannot have been Rousseau's confessor when he was at Les Charmettes.]

† Actually Father Coupier (1679-1768).

of these Jesuits that I love one for the sake of the other; and although their doctrine has always seemed to me dangerous I have never found it in me genuinely to hate them.

I should like to know whether such childish notions pass through other men's hearts as sometimes pass through mine. In the midst of my studies and of a life as innocent as any man could lead, I was still frequently disturbed by the fear of Hell, no matter what anyone might say. 'In what state am I?' I asked myself. 'If I were to die at this moment, should I be damned?' According to my Jansenists the matter was past all doubt; but according to my conscience it seemed quite otherwise. Being always fearful, and now a prey to this cruel uncertainty, I resorted to the most ludicrous expedients to overcome it. I should not hesitate, in fact, to have a man shut up in a madhouse if I saw him acting as I did. One day, when brooding on this melancholy subject, I began throwing stones at the tree trunks, and this with my usual skill, which meant that I hardly hit one. While engaged in this noble exercise, it occurred to me to draw a sort of omen from it, to allay my anxiety. 'I am going to throw this stone', I said to myself, 'at the tree facing me. If I hit it, it is a sign that I am saved; if I miss it I am damned.' As I said this I threw my stone with a trembling hand and a terrible throbbing of the heart, but so accurately that it hit the tree full in the middle; which really was not very difficult, since I had taken care to choose a very large tree very near to me. Since then I have never again doubted my salvation. But as I recall this incident I do not know whether I ought to laugh or weep. You great men, who are most certainly laughing, are welcome to congratulate yourselves. But do not insult my misery, for I feel it most deeply, I assure you.

These troubles and alarms, however, though perhaps an inevitable part of the religious life, were not a permanent state. In general I was calm enough, and the effect on my mind of the prospect of early death was not so much one of sadness as of peaceful languor, which even had its charms. I have recently discovered amongst some old papers a kind of exhortation that I made for myself, congratulating myself upon dying at an age when a man has enough courage in his heart to envisage death, and without having suffered any great physical or mental ills in the course of my life. How right I was! I was frightened by the presentiment of living on only to suffer. It was as if I foresaw the fate that awaited me in my old age. I have never been so near to wisdom as during those happy days. Since I had no great remorse for the past, and was free of all care for the future, the

dominant feeling in my heart was a constant enjoyment of the present. Religious people ordinarily possess a limited but very keen sensuality which makes them savour to the full such innocent pleasures as they are allowed. The worldly call this a crime, I do not know why; or rather I know very well. It is because they envy them the enjoyment of simple pleasures for which they have themselves lost the taste. I had that taste, and it delighted me to satisfy it with an easy conscience. My heart, which was still fresh, gave itself to everything with the joy of a child, or rather, if I may say so, with the rapture of an angel; for these quiet pleasures are in very truth as serene as the joys of Paradise. Picnic dinners at Montagnole, suppers in the harbour, the fruit-picking, the grape harvest, the evenings stripping the hemp with our servants; all these were for us so many festivals, in which Mamma took as much pleasure as I. Our more solitary walks had a still greater charm, for the heart had then more freedom for its out-pourings. One in particular forms a landmark in my memory. It is one which we took on a Saint Louis' day, which was Mamma's name day. We set out alone together in the early morning, after a mass that had been read by a visiting Carmelite at daybreak in a chapel belonging to the house. I had suggested walking along the opposite slope of the valley, where we had not yet been. We had sent our provisions on ahead, for the expedition was to take all day. Mamma, although somewhat round and fat, was not a bad walker, and we went from hill to hill and from wood to wood, sometimes in the sun and sometimes in the shade, resting from time to time and forgetting our cares for hours on end, talking of ourselves, of our relationship, and of the sweetness of our lot, and offering up prayers for its continuance, which were not granted. Everything seemed to conspire to add to the day's happiness. It had rained a short while before. There was no dust, and the streams were full. A little fresh wind shook the leaves. The air was clear and the horizon free from clouds. Serenity prevailed in the heavens, as it prevailed in our hearts. We took our dinner in a peasant's hut, sharing it with his family, who gave us their heartfelt blessings. These poor Savoyards are such good creatures! After dinner we went into the shade of some large trees where Mamma amused herself by botanizing amongst the undergrowth while I gathered dry twigs to boil our coffee. Then she took flowers from the bunch I had gathered for her on the way, and showed me a thousand curious details about their formation. This pleased me greatly and should have given me a taste for botany, but the moment had not arrived. I was preoccupied with

too many other studies. An idea struck me which diverted my mind from flowers and plants. The state of mind I was in, everything that we had said and done that day, all the objects which had caught my attention, combined to call to my mind the waking dream I had had at Annecy seven or eight years before, which I have already described in its place. The similarities were so striking that as I thought of it I was moved to tears. In an access of emotion I embraced my dear friend. 'Mamma, Mamma,' I cried passionately. 'This day has long been promised to me, I can imagine nothing more beautiful. Thanks to you, my happiness is at its height. May it not decline hereafter! May it last as long as I continue to desire it, and it will only end with my life.'

Thus my happy days flowed by; the happier because I saw nothing that could disturb them, and so foresaw no end to them that was not also my own. It was not that the flood of my anxiety was completely exhausted; but I saw it taking another course. I did my best to direct it to useful purposes so that it might bring its remedy with it. Mamma had a natural love for the country, which did not cool while she was with me. Little by little she got the taste for country pursuits; she was anxious to make the estate pay, and enjoyed the practical application of her knowledge in such matters. Not content with the land belonging to the house she had taken, she would rent first a field, then a meadow. Finally she applied her speculative talents to agriculture and, instead of remaining idly at home, was soon on the way to becoming a large farmer. I was not too happy at seeing her launch out in this manner, and I opposed it as much as I could. For I was sure that people would always deceive her, and that her generous and extravagant nature would always lead her into expenses exceeding her revenue. I consoled myself, however, with the thought that at least her receipts must amount to something, and would help her to live. Of all the schemes that she might have embarked on this seemed to me the least ruinous; and although I did not share her belief that it would be profitable, I saw in it a continuous occupation that would protect her against swindles and impostors. For this reason I was eager to regain sufficient health and strength to watch over her affairs, and to be her foreman or leading worker; the exercise this involved frequently took me from my books and my preoccupations about my state, and was naturally bound to improve my health.

1737-1741 The following winter Barillot came back from Italy, bringing me several books, amongst them the *Bontempi* and the *Cartella per musica* of Father Banchieri, which gave me a taste for the history of music and for researches into the theory of that art. Barillot stayed with us for a while, and as I had been of age for some months it was agreed that I should go to Geneva in the following spring to claim my mother's fortune, or at least the part that fell to me, until it could be ascertained what had become of my brother. The plan was carried out as arranged. I went to Geneva, and my father met me there. He had been visiting the city at intervals for some time without being molested, although the decree against him had never been reversed. But as he was admired for his courage and respected for his honesty, they pretended to have forgotten his affair. The magistrates, indeed, were extremely busy with their great project, which they burst on the world shortly afterwards, and did not want to alarm the middle classes prematurely by reminding them of an old injustice at an awkward moment.

I was afraid that I might meet with difficulties on account of my change of religion; but there were none. The laws of Geneva are less harsh in this respect than those of Berne, where anyone changing his faith not only loses his status but his property as well. So my rights were not disputed. But I found the inheritance, for some reason I do not understand, reduced to a very small sum. Although it was almost certain that my brother was dead, there was no judicial proof. I had not sufficient title to claim his share, and I did not regret leaving it. It helped to support my father, and he had the use of it so long as he lived. As soon as the judicial formalities were completed and I had received my money, I invested some part of it in books, and flew with the rest to lay it at Mamma's feet.* My heart pounded with joy on the road, and the moment when I put it in her hands was a thousand times sweeter to me than that in which it had come into mine. She received it with a simple-heartedness common in great souls, who are not surprised by such deeds in others since they perform them without effort themselves. This money was spent almost entirely upon me, and with the same simple-heartedness. She would have used it no differently if it had come to her from another source.

[* This would be in the summer of 1737. But the stay at Les Charmettes, just described, belongs to 1738. There is great confusion here in Rousseau's memories.]

Meanwhile my health was far from recovering; on the contrary I was visibly wasting away. I was as deathly pale and as thin as a skeleton; the throbbing in my arteries was terrible, and my heart palpitations more frequent. I was continually short of breath, and finally I became so weak that I found it difficult to move. I could not hurry without a feeling of suffocation; I could not stoop without turning giddy; I could not lift the smallest weight, and was reduced to an inactivity most painful to a man as restless as I am. No doubt there was a great deal of the *vapours** mixed up in all this. The *vapours*, being the malady of happy people, was therefore mine. The tears that I often shed for no reason, my alarm at the fall of a leaf or the fluttering of a bird, my changes of mood amidst the calm of a most pleasing life; all these were signs of a surfeit of happiness which leads to boredom and, so to speak, to an exaggerated sensibility. So little are we formed for happiness here below that of necessity either the soul or the body must suffer – if they do not both do so – and the prosperity of either is nearly always harmful to the other. When I might have been enjoying the delights of life, my decaying physique prevented me, though no one could make out the true seat or cause of the disease. Later, despite my declining years and very real and serious maladies, my body seems to have regained its strength, the better to feel my sufferings; and now as I write this, weak and close upon sixty, and racked by pains of every description, I feel more strength and life in me with which to suffer than I had for enjoyment when I was in the flower of my youth and in the midst of genuine happiness.

To complete my undoing, I had varied my reading with a little physiology, and had begun to study anatomy. When I surveyed the number and workings of the various parts that compose the human frame I expected to feel all mine going wrong twenty times a day. Far from being astonished at finding myself to be dying, I was amazed still to be alive, and there was not an illness of which I read the description that I did not imagine to be mine. I am sure that if I had not been ill already this fatal study would have made me so. Since I found in every disease some symptoms of my own, I believed that I had them all; and on top of this I contracted a still more cruel complaint from which I had thought myself free; the wild desire to be cured,

[*I have retained the eighteenth-century word, although hypochondria or even hysteria would be a modern translation. But Rousseau did not see his condition in modern terms and thought of himself as suffering like some young lady from 'a fit of the vapours'.]

which it is very difficult to avoid when one begins to read medical books. By dint of research, reflection, and comparison I came to imagine that the root of my disease was a polypus on the heart, and Salomon himself seemed struck by the idea. This conclusion should reasonably have confirmed me in my previous resolution. But its effect was quite the opposite. I summoned all my mental powers to discover how a polypus on the heart could be cured; for this miraculous cure I was resolved to undertake. Anet had been told, on a journey he had made to Montpellier, to visit the botanical gardens and its curator, M. Sauvages, that M. Fizes had cured a polypus of this kind. Mamma remembered this and mentioned the fact to me. That was sufficient to kindle in me the desire to go and consult M. Fizes. The hope of a cure gave me back sufficient courage and strength to undertake the journey; and the money from Geneva supplied the means. Far from dissuading me, Mamma encouraged me to go; and so I set out for Montpellier.

I did not have to go as far as that to discover the doctor I needed. As riding tired me too much, I had taken a carriage at Grenoble. At Moirans five or six carriages arrived, in procession, after my own. This time, it was indeed the adventure of the sedan-chairs.* Most of these carriages were the escort of a recently wedded bride whose name was Mme du Colombier. With her was another lady, Mme de Larnage,† who was less young and handsome, but no less charming than she. The bride was going no further than Romans, but Mme de Larnage was to go on from there to Bourg-Saint-Andéol, near Pont-Saint-Esprit. Considering my well-known bashfulness, no one will expect me to have struck up an immediate acquaintance with these elegant ladies and the suite attending them. But in the end as I was following the same road, lodging in the same inns and, through fear of appearing an absolute boor, was obliged to appear at the same table, it was unavoidable that we should become acquainted; which we did, and rather sooner than I should have wished, for all this bustle was hardly suitable for a sick man, and especially for one of my temperament. But curiosity makes those rogues the ladies so insinuating that when they want to get to know a man they begin by turning his head. Such was the case with me. Mme du Colombier was too closely besieged by her young gallants to have any time to attract me.

[* Another reference to the incident in Scarron's *Roman comique*.]

[† She would have been forty-four at the time, and had been the mother of ten children.]

Besides, it was not worth her while, for we were soon to part company. But Mme de Larnage was less beset by admirers, and had to make provision for her longer journey. So she undertook my conquest, and it was good-bye to poor Jean-Jacques, or rather to his fever, his *vapours*, and his polypus. It was good-bye to everything when in her company, except certain palpitations which remained and of which she did not wish to cure me. My poor state of health was the first subject of our conversation. They saw that I was ill, they knew that I was going to Montpellier; and neither my appearance nor my manners suggested that I was a debauchee – for it was clear from what followed that they did not suspect me of going there to be cured of the effects of over-indulgence. Although a state of illness is no great recommendation for a man in a woman's eyes, it made me interesting to those ladies. In the morning they would send to inquire after my health and to invite me to take chocolate with them; they would ask me how I had slept. Once, following my praiseworthy custom of speaking without reflection, I replied that I did not know. My answer made them think I was mad. They examined me more closely and this examination was not to my disadvantage. On one occasion I heard Mme du Colombier say to her friend: 'He is inexperienced, but he has charm.' This verdict greatly reassured me, and I became charming indeed.

As our intimacy grew it was necessary to speak of oneself, to say where one came from and where one was going. This embarrassed me, for I knew that in polite society and with fashionable ladies the very word convert would ruin me. I do not know what freak decided me to pass myself off as an Englishman. I announced myself to be a Jacobite, and they believed me. I gave myself the name of Dudding, and they called me M. Dudding. A confounded Marquis de Torignan,* who was with them, a sick man like myself and old and somewhat crotchety into the bargain, took it into his head to start a conversation with M. Dudding. He talked to me about King James and the Pretender, and the old Court of St Germain. I was on thorns; all I knew about them was the little I had read in Count Hamilton and in the newspapers. But this little I used so well that I got out of my difficulty. Luckily no one thought of questioning me about the English language, of which I did not know a single word.

We got on well together and the whole company regretted the prospect of our parting. So we travelled at a snail's pace. One Sunday,

[* Actually Taulignan.]

when we were at Saint-Marcellin, Mme de Larnage decided to go to Mass, and I went with her, which almost spoilt my game. I behaved no differently from usual, but from my modest and attentive expression she concluded that I was a pious fellow, and conceived the worst possible opinion of me, as she confessed to me two days later. I had to exercise considerable gallantry to wipe out this bad impression; or rather Mme de Larnage, being a woman of experience not easily put off, decided to risk some advances to see how I would extricate myself. She made several and in such a way that, far from attributing them to my good looks, I believed that she was making fun of me. With this silly idea in my head there was no sort of stupidity that I did not commit; I was worse than the Marquis de Legs.* Mme de Larnage stood her ground, tempting me so often and using such tender language that a man far wiser than I would have found it difficult to take it all seriously. The more she persisted the more she confirmed me in my idea; and what tortured me still more was that I was falling seriously in love with her. 'Ah, if all this were true!' I said to myself, and repeated to her with a sigh. 'Then I should be the happiest of men.' I think that my raw simplicity merely piqued her fancy; she was determined not to accept defeat.

We had left Mme du Colombier and her escort at Romans; and Mme de Larnage, the Marquis de Torignan, and I pursued our journey in the slowest and pleasantest way in the world. The Marquis, though a sick man and grumbler, was a decent enough fellow, but he did not like dry bread when others were enjoying a roast. Mme de Larnage took so little pains to hide her partiality for me that he was aware of it before I was; and his biting sarcasm would certainly have given me the assurance I did not venture to draw from the lady's kindnesses if, by a perversity of which no one but I was capable, I had not imagined them to be leagued together to make a fool of me. This absurd idea finally turned my head, and I behaved like an utter simpleton in a situation where my heart, being really roused, might have taught me to play not too dull a part. I cannot conceive why Mme de Larnage was not repelled by my long face, and did not dismiss me in utter disdain. But she was an intelligent woman, who knew her way about the world, and saw clearly that there was more stupidity than lukewarmness in my behaviour.

She finally succeeded in making herself understood, and it was not

[* Character in Marivaux's comedy *The Legacy*; the Marquis is absurdly bashful, his bride the reverse.]

without difficulty. We had arrived at Valence in time for dinner and, according to our excellent custom, we spent the rest of the day there. We had put up outside the town, at Saint-Jacques. I shall always remember that inn, and the room in it which Mme de Larnage occupied. After dinner she wanted to take a walk. She knew that the Marquis was no walker, and this was her way of contriving a *tête-à-tête*, which she had decided to make good use of, for there was no time to lose if any was to be left for enjoyment. We walked around the town by the side of the moat. There I resumed the long story of my illnesses, and she replied to me in so tender a tone, clasping my arm and sometimes pressing it to her heart, that only stupidity like mine could have prevented me from realizing that she meant what she said. The preposterous thing was that I was extremely moved myself. I have said that she was pleasing; love made her attractive, giving her back all the sparkle of her early youth; and she made her advances so cunningly that she would have seduced even a man on his guard. I was very ill at ease therefore, and always on the point of taking some liberty; but I was restrained by the fear of offending or displeasing, and by the still greater fear of being hissed and booed and ridiculed, of providing an after-dinner anecdote and of being congratulated on my enterprise by the pitiless Marquis. I was angry with myself for my stupid bashfulness, and for being unable to overcome it; but at the same time I reproached myself for it. I was in tortures. I had already abandoned my shy lover's language, of which I realized the full absurdity now that I was well on the road. But, not knowing what manner to adopt or what to say, I remained silent, and looked sulky. In fact I did everything in my power to court the treatment I had feared. Fortunately Mme de Larnage took a more humane line. She abruptly cut this silence short by putting her arm round my neck; and in a second her lips, pressed upon my own, spoke too clearly to leave me in doubt. The crisis could not have come at a happier moment. I became charming. It was time. She had given me that confidence, the lack of which almost always prevents me from being master of myself. For once I was myself. Never have my eyes and my senses, my heart and my mouth, spoken so eloquently; never have I so completely atoned for my errors; and though her little conquest had cost Mme de Larnage some trouble, I had reason to believe that she did not regret it.

Were I to live for a hundred years I should never remember that charming woman without pleasure. I say charming, though she was

neither young nor beautiful; but since she was neither old nor plain there was nothing in her appearance to prevent her intelligence and her graces from producing their full effect. She differed from other women in this respect. Her least fresh feature was her complexion; I think she had spoiled it with rouge. She had her reasons for being so easy; it allowed her to display all her charms. One could see her without loving her, but to possess her was to adore her. And that proves, I think, that she was not always as liberal with her favours as she was to me. She had been seized with too quick and lively a passion to be excusable, but her heart was involved as well as her senses; and during the short and delightful time that I spent with her I had reason to believe, from the restraint she imposed on me, that although sensual and self-indulgent, she preferred my health to her own pleasures.

Our understanding did not escape the Marquis. He did not stop chaffing me; on the contrary, he treated me more than ever as the poor enraptured lover, a martyr to the cruelty of his lady. Not a word, not a smile, not a look escaped him to make me suspect that he had guessed our secret; and I should have thought him in the dark if Mme de Larnage, who had keener eyes than I, had not told me that he was not, but that he was a man of honour. And indeed no one could have been so politely attentive or have behaved more courteously than he invariably did, even towards me, except for his chaffing, and especially after my conquest. Perhaps he attributed the credit of it to me, and supposed that I was less stupid than I had looked. He was wrong, as we know. But no matter, I took advantage of his mistake. For the laugh was truly on my side then, and I endured his sallies willingly and with a fair grace. I retorted at times, even with tolerable success, being proud to display in Mme de Larnage's presence the wit which I owed to her. I was no longer the same man.

We were in a country of plenty at a season of good cheer and, thanks to the Marquis' good offices, we enjoyed it to the full. I could have dispensed with his extending his attentions to our bedrooms, however. But he always sent his lackey ahead to engage them, and the rascal, either on his own responsibility or upon his master's instructions, always placed him in the next room to Mme de Larnage and me at the other end of the house. But this caused me very little embarrassment, and added a spice to our meetings. This delicious existence lasted three or four days during which I grew drunk upon the sweetest of pleasures. They were pure and sharp and without any alloy of pain; and they were the first and the last I have ever savoured

in that way. I may say, indeed, that I owe it to Mme de Larnage that I shall not die without having known sensual delight.

If what I felt for her was not precisely love, it was at least so tender a return for the love she showed me, there was so hot a sensuality in our pleasures and so sweet an intimacy in our talk, that it had all the charm of passion without that delirium which turns the head and makes enjoyment impossible. I have only felt true love once in my life, and that was not for her. I did not love her either as I had loved Mme de Warens; and it was for that reason that I was a hundred times more successful in our intercourse. With Mamma my pleasure was always troubled by a feeling of sadness, by a secret oppression at the heart that I had difficulty in overcoming; instead of congratulating myself upon possessing her, I would reproach myself for degrading her. With Mme de Larnage, on the other hand, I was proud of my manhood and good fortune, and abandoned myself joyfully and confidently to my senses; I shared the sensuality I roused in her, and was sufficiently master of myself to look on my triumph with as much pride as pleasure, and thereby to derive the wherewithal to repeat it.

I do not remember the town at which the Marquis left us, for he belonged to that district. But we were alone before we reached Montélimar, and at this point Mme de Larnage moved her lady's maid into my carriage, and I rode with her in hers. I can assure you that travelling was not at all tedious under these conditions, and I should find it very difficult to describe the nature of the country we passed through. She had some business at Montélimar, which kept her there three days, during which time, however, she only left me for a quarter of an hour to pay a visit, which brought her some tiresome and pressing invitations that she had no wish to accept. She pleaded an indisposition which did not prevent us, however, from taking walks alone together every day in the loveliest country and under the most beautiful sky in the world. Oh, those three days! How sadly I have looked back on them sometimes, and with reason; for I have known none like them since.

Travellers' love affairs are not made to last. We had to part; and I confess that it was time. Not that I was satiated or even nearly so; I grew more attached to her every day. But despite all the lady's moderation I had little left except the will, and before we separated I wanted to avail myself of that little, which she allowed me to do as a precaution against the girls of Montpellier. We beguiled our sorrow with plans for a new meeting. It was decided that since this treatment

did me good I should continue with it, and that I should spend the winter at Bourg-Saint-Andéol, under her direction. But I must stay at Montpellier for five or six weeks in order to leave her time to prepare things in such a way as to avoid scandal. She gave me ample instructions as to what I was to know, what I was to say, and how I was to behave. In the meantime we must write to one another. She spoke to me long and seriously about the care of my health, begged me to consult skilled physicians and to follow all their instructions most carefully, and promised, however strict their régime, to make me follow it while I was with her. I think that she meant what she said, for she loved me, and of this she gave me countless proofs more convincing than her favours. From my general appearance she concluded that I was not rolling in riches; and though not wealthy herself, she tried to force me on parting to share the contents of her purse, which had been pretty well filled when she left Grenoble. I had a great deal of difficulty in refusing. I left her in the end with my whole heart full of her, and there was, I thought, a genuine affection for me in hers.

For the remainder of my journey I went over the early part in my memory, and I was very glad for the moment to be driving in a comfortable carriage, which enabled me to dream at my ease of the pleasures I had enjoyed and of those in store for me. I thought of nothing but Bourg-Saint-Andéol and of the delightful life awaiting me there; I saw only Mme de Larnage or what related to her. All the rest of the world was nothing to me, even Mamma was forgotten. I busied myself by putting together in my head all the details which Mme de Larnage had given me, so that I should have some idea in advance of her house, her neighbourhood, the people she knew, and her whole way of life. She had one daughter of whom she had talked to me very often with maternal over-indulgence. This girl was in her sixteenth year, lively, charming, and of a pleasant disposition. Her mother promised that Mlle de Larnage would make much of me, and I had not forgotten that promise; I was most curious to see how she would behave to her mother's lover. Such were the subjects of my reveries from Pont-Saint-Esprit to Remoulins. I had been advised to go and see the Pont du Gard, and did not fail to do so. After an excellent breakfast of figs I took a guide and went to view it. These were the first Roman remains I had seen. I expected to find a monument worthy of the hands that had made it, but for once the reality exceeded my expectations. It is the only time in my life that

this has happened, and none but the Romans could have affected me in this way.

The impression which this simple and noble work made upon me was heightened by its situation. It stands in the midst of a waste, whose silence and solitude make it more striking and increase one's admiration. For this so-called bridge is in fact simply an aqueduct. One wonders what power transported those enormous stones to such a distance from any quarry and brought the strength of so many thousand men to a place inhabited by none. I walked through the three storeys of that magnificent work, though reverence almost prevented my treading its stones underfoot. The echo of my steps beneath its immense vaults made me imagine I heard the loud voices of the men who built it. I was lost like an insect in that immensity. In spite of my sense of smallness I felt my soul to be in some way elevated, and said to myself with a sigh: 'If only I had been born a Roman!' I remained there for several hours in rapturous contemplation and returned dreary and distracted. This reverie was by no means to the advantage of Mme de Larnage. She had taken care to warn me against the girls of Montpellier, but not against the Pont du Gard. One can never provide against everything.

At Nîmes I went to see the amphitheatre. It is a much more magnificent monument than the Pont du Gard, but made much less impression on me. Perhaps my admiration was exhausted by that first sight; perhaps the amphitheatre's position in the middle of a town was less calculated to excite it. This vast and superb circus is surrounded by ugly little houses, and the arena itself is filled with others even smaller and uglier, so that the whole produces a confused and inharmonious effect, in which anger and disappointment stifle one's pleasure and surprise. Since then I have seen the amphitheatre at Verona. It is infinitely smaller and less beautiful than the one at Nîmes, but it is carefully preserved and kept most scrupulously tidy, for which reason alone it made a stronger and more agreeable impression on me. The French do not take care of anything, and have no respect for monuments. They are all afire for new undertakings, but they cannot finish or preserve anything.

I was so completely changed, and my appetite, once restored, was now so lively that I stopped for a day at the 'Pont de Lunel' to enjoy its good fare with the company I found there. This inn was the most famous in Europe, and at that time deserved its reputation. The people who ran it had turned its fortunate position to good account, and kept

it abundantly stocked with choice provisions. It was really surprising to find at a lonely house, isolated in the middle of the country, a table at which fresh and salt water fish, excellent game and good wines, were served with all the care and civility that one finds only in the houses of the rich and great – and all this for thirty-five *sous* a head. But the ‘Pont de Lunel’ did not retain its perfection for long; by trading on its reputation, it finally lost it altogether.

On the road I had forgotten that I was sick; I remembered when I came to Montpellier. My *vapours* were certainly cured, but all my other maladies remained; and though familiarity had made me less sensitive to them, they were enough to convince anyone suddenly attacked by them that he was really at death’s door. As a matter of fact, they were less painful than alarming, and caused more suffering to the mind than to the body whose destruction they seemed to portend. While distracted by violent passions, therefore, I ceased to think of my condition; but since it was not imaginary I was aware of it as soon as I was cool again. So I thought seriously of Mme de Larnage’s advice and of the purpose of my long journey. I went to consult the most famous physicians, M. Fizes in particular, and, as an additional precaution, took up my lodgings with a doctor. He was an Irishman by the name of Fitzmorris, who boarded a considerable number of medical students; and there was this advantage about his house for an invalid, that he was content with a moderate sum for board, and did not charge his guests anything for medical attention. He undertook to carry out M. Fizes’ instructions and to look after my health. In the matter of diet he acquitted himself to perfection; one could not get indigestion on his fare; and although I am not very sensitive to privations of this sort, objects of comparison were so close that I could not help thinking to myself at times – ‘M. de Torignan is a better provider than M. Fitzmorris.’ However, as we were not absolutely starved, and all the young people were extremely cheerful, this way of life really did me good, and prevented my lapsing into my old depression. I spent the mornings taking medicines – some waters or other in particular which I think came from Vals – and writing to Mme de Larnage. For our correspondence went steadily on, and Rousseau kindly undertook to collect his friend Dudding’s letters. At noon I strolled down to La Canourge with one of my young fellow boarders, who were all good fellows. After that we assembled and went in to dinner. After dinner the majority of us were busy with important business till evening: we went out of town and played two

or three games of mall for our tea. I did not play; I had neither the strength nor the skill; but I betted on the game, and followed the players and their balls with a gambler's interest across rough and stony roads, thereby getting pleasant and healthy exercise, which was quite the right thing for me. We took our snack at an inn outside the town. I have no need to say that these little meals were gay. But I will record that there was no immodesty although there were pretty girls at the inn. M. Fitzmorris, a great mall player, was our president; and I can say that despite the bad reputation of students it would have been hard to find such decency and such good manners among as many grown men as I found in these youngsters. They were noisy but not indelicate, merry but not dissolute; and I adjust myself so easily to a way of life, so long as it is not forced on me, that there was nothing I should have liked better than for this to last for ever. There were several Irishmen among the students from whom I tried to learn a few words of English in preparation for Bourg-Saint-Andéol, for the time was approaching when I must go there. Mme de Larnage was urging me by every post, and I was preparing to obey her. It was clear that my doctors, who had discovered nothing about my illness, regarded me as a hypochondriac, and treated me as such with their china root, their waters, and their whey. In complete contrast to theologians, doctors and philosophers only admit to be true such things as they are able to explain; they make their own understanding the measure of all possibilities. These gentlemen understood nothing about my complaint; therefore I was not ill. For how could one doubt that doctors know everything? I saw that they were only trying to fool me and make me eat up my money; and concluding that their substitute at Bourg-Saint-Andéol could do that just as well but more pleasantly, I decided to give her the preference and, with this wise resolution, left Montpellier.

I departed towards the end of November, after staying for six or eight weeks in this town, leaving a dozen *louis* behind me without any advantage to my health or education, except for a course in anatomy begun under M. Fitzmorris's instruction. This I was compelled to abandon owing to the horrible odour of the corpses they dissected, which I was unable to endure.

Being somewhat perturbed in my thoughts about the decision I had taken, I reflected on it as I resumed my journey towards the Pont Saint-Esprit, along the road which led not only to Bourg-Saint-Andéol but also to Chambéry. Memories of Mamma and her letters --

though they were less frequent than Mme de Larnage's – wakened that remorse in my heart that I had stifled on my outward journey. So keen did it become on my way back that it outweighed my love of pleasure, and left me in the position to listen to pure reason. In the first place, I might not be as happy in the role of adventurer which I was about to resume as I had been in the beginning. It only needed one person in the whole of Bourg-Saint-Andéol who had been in England, or knew the English or their language, to unmask me. Mme de Larnage's family might take an objection to me and treat me impolitely. Her daughter, about whom involuntarily I thought more than I should have done, worried me still more. I trembled at the idea of falling in love with her, and that fear half concluded the matter. Was I then to repay the mother's kindnesses by corrupting the daughter, by starting a most detestable intrigue, by introducing dissension, dishonour, scandal, and hell itself into that house? The very idea horrified me, and I formed the firm resolve to battle with myself and win should I feel this unfortunate attraction. But why expose myself to such a battle? What a wretched state of things to live with the mother, of whom I should be tired, and to be on fire for the daughter without daring to declare my feelings! Was there any necessity to court this situation and to expose myself to reverses, insults, and remorse for the sake of pleasures whose main charm I had exhausted beforehand? For my attachment had certainly lost its early vigour. It still seemed to promise pleasure, but the passion had gone out of it. And with these reflections came others on the subject of my situation and my duties, and thoughts of my poor Mamma, already loaded with debts, and incurring more by my wild spending; of my generous Mamma who was draining herself dry for me and whom I was deceiving most disgracefully. My self-reproach became so strong that it finally triumphed. As I came to Saint-Esprit I made up my mind not to stop at Bourg-Saint-Andéol, but to go straight on. I kept to my resolution courageously, with a few sighs I admit. But I had also the inward satisfaction of saying to myself, for the first time in my life: 'I have a right to think well of myself. I am capable of putting duty before pleasure.' This is the first real advantage I derived from my studies: they had taught me to reflect and to compare values. After the strict principles I had so recently adopted, after the wise and virtuous rules I had drawn up for myself and felt so proud to be following, the shameful sense that I should be acting with flagrant inconsistency, and that I should be promptly and signally belying my own maxims,

gained the victory over sensuality. Perhaps pride played as large a part in my resolution as virtue. But if pride is not itself a virtue, it has such similar effects that it is pardonable to confuse them.

One advantage resulting from virtuous actions is that they elevate the mind and dispose it to attempt others more virtuous still. For such is human weakness that one must number among one's good deeds abstinence from the wickednesses one is tempted to commit. As soon as I had taken this resolution I became another man, or rather I was once more the man I had formerly been, who had vanished in that moment of intoxication. Full of worthy sentiments and excellent resolutions, I continued on my way with the firm intention of expiating my fault and with no other thought but of guiding my conduct henceforth by the laws of virtue, of devoting myself unreservedly to the service of the best of mothers, of swearing a loyalty to her equal to my attachment, and of hearkening to no other love but the love of duty. Alas! the sincerity of my return to virtue seemed to promise me a different fate. But mine was written, and already begun; and when, brimming over with love of all that was honest and good, my heart could see nothing in the whole of life but innocence and happiness, I was approaching that fatal moment that was to bring the long procession of my misfortunes in its train.

My impatience to reach home made me travel more rapidly than I had expected. I had written to Mamma from Valence announcing the day and hour of my return. Having gained half a day on my reckoning, I spent that time at Chaparillan, so as to arrive at the exact moment I had fixed. I wanted to taste the delight of seeing her again to the full, and preferred to defer my pleasure, in order also to be expected. This precaution had always been successful before. I had always found my arrival marked by a sort of little celebration, and I expected as much on this occasion. These small attentions, which touched me so deeply, were well worth the trouble of contriving.

I arrived, therefore, punctual to the minute. I looked out from afar in hope of seeing her in the road; my heart beat with increasing violence as I drew near. I arrived out of breath, for I had left my carriage in the town. I saw no one in the yard, at the door, at the window. I began to be worried. I was afraid there had been some accident. I went in. All was quiet. Some workmen were eating in the kitchen. But no preparation for my homecoming! The maid seemed surprised to see me; she did not know that I was expected. I went upstairs and saw my dear Mamma at last, whom I loved so tenderly,

so deeply, so purely. I ran to her, and threw myself at her feet. 'Oh, so you have come, little one,' she exclaimed and embraced me. 'Have you had a good journey? How are you?' This reception set me back a little. I asked her whether she had received my letter. She answered, yes. 'I should have thought you had not,' I replied, and the explanation ended there. There was a young man with her. I recognized him, for I had seen him about the house before I left. But now he seemed to be established there, and he was. In short I found my place filled.

This young man* came from the Vaud country; his father's name was Vintzenried, and he was keeper, or as he called himself captain, of the Castle of Chillon. This captain's son was a journeyman wig-maker, and whilst travelling the country in this capacity had presented himself to Mme de Warens, who welcomed him, as she did all travellers, and especially those from her own country. He was a tall, pale, silly youth, tolerably well-built, with a face as dull as his wits, and he talked like a beau in a comedy, mingling the airs and manners of his calling with the long history of his conquests, mentioning only a half of the Marchionesses with whom he claimed to have slept, and pretending never to have dressed the head of a pretty woman without at the same time duping her husband. He was vain and stupid, ignorant and insolent, but in other ways the best fellow in the world. Such was the man who had taken my place during my absence, the partner who was offered me on my return.

If souls once free from earthly shackles still see, from the heart of eternal light, what passes among mortals, pardon me, dear and honoured shade, if I have been no kinder to your faults than to my own and reveal them both alike to the eyes of my readers! I must and will speak as truthfully about you as about myself. You will lose far less by it than I. For your charming and gentle character, the inexhaustible kindness of your heart, your frankness and all your shining virtues are sufficient to redeem innumerable failings, should your errors, which were only errors of judgement, count as such. You made mistakes, but you were never wicked. Your behaviour was culpable, but your heart was always pure.

The newcomer had proved eager, painstaking, and careful in carrying out all her numerous little errands. He had appointed himself overseer of the workmen. Being noisy where I was quiet, he had made himself seen and heard in all places at once: at the plough, in the

[*Jean-Samuel-Rodolphe Wintzenried (1706-72). His father was quite an important official.]

hay-loft, in the woods, at the stable, and in the yard. He neglected nothing except the garden, for gardening was too peaceful a job for him and did not make enough noise. His great joy was to load and drive a waggon, to saw and split wood; and he was always to be seen with an axe or a mattock in his hand, always to be heard running about, and thumping and shouting at the top of his voice. I do not know how many men's work he did, but he made noise enough for ten or a dozen. All this hullabaloo took poor Mamma in; she thought this young man was a treasure, and in order to attach him to herself used every means she thought likely to be effective, not omitting the one in which she placed most reliance.

My reader should know my heart by now, and my most constant and genuine feelings, especially those which had brought me back to her at that moment. Suddenly my whole being was thrown completely upside down. To judge of it, let my reader put himself in my place. In one moment I saw the happy future I had depicted for myself vanish for ever. All the sweet dreams I had indulged with such affection disappeared; and I, who even from childhood had never contemplated my existence apart from hers, found myself for the first time alone. It was a frightful moment; and those which followed it were just as dark. I was still young, but that pleasant feeling of joy and hope that enlivens youth left me for ever. From that time, as a sensitive being, I was half dead. I could see nothing before me but the sad remains of a savourless life; and if sometimes afterwards some thought of happiness awakened my desires, it was no longer a happiness that was really my own. I felt that if I obtained it I should not really be happy.

I was so stupid and so full of confidence that I regarded the new-comer's familiar tone as merely the product of Mamma's easy-going disposition, which drew everyone to her; and I should not have thought of suspecting the true cause if she had not told me of it herself. But she hastened to make me this confession with a frankness which might have added to my rage, if my heart had been able to take that line. She herself found it all quite simple, reproached me for my negligence in the house, and pleaded my frequent absences, as if she had been of a temperament that found it urgent to fill the void. 'Ah, Mamma,' I cried, my heart racked with grief, 'Have you the courage to tell me this? What a reward for such devotion as mine! have you so often saved my life only in order to rob me of everything that has made me value it? This will kill me, but you will be sorry.' She

replied in a calm voice, calculated to madden me, that I was a child, that no one died of such things, that I should lose nothing, that we should be just as good friends, just as intimate in every way, that her affection for me could not dwindle or end except with her life. She gave me to understand, in brief, that all my rights remained unaltered, and that by sharing them with another I should in no way be deprived of them.

Never did the purity, the genuineness, and the strength of my feeling for her, never did the sincerity and honesty of my soul, more forcibly affect me than at that moment. I threw myself at her feet, I embraced her knees, and burst into floods of tears. 'No, Mamma,' I cried, half distracted. 'I love you too much to degrade you. Possession of you is too dear to be shared. The regrets I felt when first you gave yourself to me have grown with my love. I cannot retain your favours at such a price. You will always have my adoration. Always be worthy of it! It is more necessary for me to respect you than to possess you. I will give you up to yourself alone, Mamma. It is to our hearts' union that I sacrifice my pleasures. May I die a thousand times before I take any that degrade the woman I love!'

I kept this resolution with a constancy worthy, I venture to say, of the feeling that had inspired it. From that moment I never saw my beloved Mamma again except with the eyes of a true son; and it is remarkable that although she secretly disapproved of my resolution, as I most clearly perceived, she never attempted to make me renounce it by any of those insinuating suggestions or caresses, or by any of that cunning provocation that women can use without committing themselves, and that rarely fail of success. Reduced to seeking an existence independent of her and not being able even to imagine one, I soon moved to the opposite extreme, and sought it entirely in her, so entirely in fact that I almost succeeded in forgetting myself. My ardent desire to see her happy at any cost absorbed my whole affection. It was useless for her to divide her happiness from mine. I looked upon hers as my own, nevertheless.

Thus there began to spring up with my misfortunes those virtues whose seed lay at the bottom of my heart. They had been cultivated by study, and were only waiting the ferment of adversity in order to sprout. The first result of my new disinterestedness was the banishment from my heart of all feelings of hatred or envy against my supplanter. I wished, and wished sincerely, to grow fond of this young man, to form him, to work at his education, to make him

realize his good fortune and, if possible, to make him worthy of it; in a word, to do for him what Anet had done for me under like circumstances. But similarities of character were lacking. Although gentler and better read than Anet, I had neither his coolness nor his firmness nor that strength of character which inspires respect and which I should have required if I were to succeed. Still less did I find in this young man the qualities that Anet had found in me: docility, affection, gratitude, and, above all, consciousness of my need for his help and the ardent desire to make good use of it. None of that was present here. The man I was trying to shape saw nothing in me but a tiresome pedant who could do nothing but chatter. On the other hand, he fancied himself as an important person about the house; and measuring the services he believed himself to be performing by the noise he made, he regarded his axes and mattocks as infinitely more useful than all my old books. From a certain standpoint he was not wrong, but he went on from there to give himself such airs as would make anyone die of laughing. With the peasants he played the country gentleman, and soon he did the same with me, and finally with Mamma herself. His name of Vintzenried did not seem to him sufficiently noble, so he became M. de Courtilles, by which title he was afterwards known at Chambéry and in the Maurienne, where he eventually married.

At length this illustrious personage succeeded in making himself all important in the house, and in reducing me to a cipher. Since whenever I was so unfortunate as to displease him it was Mamma he scolded and not me, fear of exposing her to his brutalities made me give in to his every desire; and each time he cut wood, a job he performed with inordinate pride, I had to be an idle spectator, and quietly admire his prowess. This young man was not, however, utterly ill-natured. He loved Mamma, because it was impossible not to do so; he did not even take an aversion to me, and when a pause in his violent activities permitted of his being spoken to, he listened to us quietly enough, frankly owning indeed that he was nothing but a fool, after which he did not fail to commit fresh follies. He had, moreover, so limited an intelligence and such low tastes that it was difficult to talk sense to him, and almost impossible to feel at ease in his company. Not content with possessing a most charming woman, he kept also, as an extra spice, an old red-headed, toothless chambermaid whose disgusting services Mamma had the patience to endure, although it turned her stomach. I observed this new intrigue and was

beside myself with indignation. But I observed something else which affected me still more seriously, and threw me into a much deeper depression than anything that had occurred till then: and that was Mamma's growing coolness towards me.

That privation which I had imposed on myself and which she had pretended to approve is one of those things that women do not pardon, whatever show they make of doing so; not so much on account of the resulting privation to themselves, but because it seems to imply a certain indifference to their favours. Take the most sensible, the most philosophical, the least sensual of women: the most unpardonable crime that a man in whom she is not otherwise interested can commit is that of not possessing her when he has the chance of doing so. This rule can admit of no exception, seeing that so strong and so natural an affection in Mamma was completely changed by an abstinence in me which had no other motive in me but virtue, affection, and esteem. From that moment I ceased to find that intimacy in her heart which had afforded such deep delight to mine. She no longer poured herself out to me except when she had some complaint about the new-comer. When they were on good terms with one another, I enjoyed very few of her confidences. Finally, and little by little, she adopted a way of life in which I no longer had a share. My company still gave her pleasure, but it was no longer necessary to her. I could have spent whole days without seeing her, and she would not have noticed it.

Insensibly I found myself isolated and alone in that same house of which I had formerly been the centre, and in which I now led, so to speak, a double life. I learnt little by little to cut myself off from everything that was done there, and from its inhabitants too, and to spare myself continual mortifications I shut myself up with my books, or went to sigh and weep unobserved in the depths of the woods. This life soon became absolutely unbearable to me. The physical presence and the mental estrangement of a woman so dear to me seemed to aggravate my grief. So thinking that if I no longer saw her I should feel less cruelly estranged from her, I resolved to leave the house. When I told her of my plan, far from opposing it, she gave it her approval. She had an acquaintance at Grenoble, named Mme Deybens, whose husband was a friend of M. de Mably, chief provost of Lyons. M. Deybens suggested to me that I should act as tutor to M. de Mably's children. I accepted, and left for Lyons* without causing, and almost without feeling, the slightest regret at a parting

[* In April 1740.]

the mere idea of which would once have afforded us both the most agonizing torments.

I had almost enough knowledge for a tutor, and I thought I had the aptitude. The year I spent at M. de Mably's gave me time to undeceive myself. My mild nature would have fitted me for the profession if my excitability had not led to storms. So long as all went well, and I saw some reward for the care and trouble of which I was lavish in those days, I was an angel; but when things went wrong I was the devil. When my pupils did not understand me I raved; and when they showed signs of disobedience I could have killed them. That was not the way to make them good and wise. There were two of them, very different in temperament. One, whose name was Saint-Marie, was between eight and nine, good looking, fairly intelligent, rather lively, headstrong, humorous, and naughty, though good-humoured in his mischief. But Condillac,* the younger, seemed almost an idiot; he laughed at any trifle, was as stubborn as a mule, and could not learn a thing. As can be imagined, between the two of them I had not an easy job. With patience and coolness I might, perhaps, have been successful. But, having neither, I could do nothing right, and my pupils turned out very badly. I was not lacking in industry, but I had no patience and, worse still, no tact. I only knew three methods to employ with them, the appeal to sentiment, argument, and anger – which are always useless and sometimes pernicious when employed on children. Sometimes I pleaded with Saint-Marie till the tears came to my eyes, in an attempt to wake his feelings, as if a child were capable of real emotion; sometimes I exhausted myself by reasoning with him, as if he could have understood me; and as he sometimes answered me with extremely subtle arguments, I seriously allowed his use of reason to persuade me that he was a reasonable being.

Little Condillac was still more difficult. He understood nothing, never answered, and was affected by nothing. He was immovable in his obstinacy, and was never so triumphant as when he had put me in a rage. Then he was the wise man and I was the child. I saw all my mistakes, and was conscious of them. I studied my pupils' minds. I used considerable penetration, and I do not think that I was even once deceived by their tricks. But what was the good of my seeing the disease if I could not apply the remedy? My penetration was unavailing; it prevented nothing. All my attempts were failures. Everything

[* Named after his uncle the Abbé de Condillac of the French Academy (1715-80), author of the *Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge*.]

I did was precisely the opposite of what I should have done.

I hardly did myself any more good than I did my pupils. Mme Deybens had recommended me to Mme de Mably, with the request that she should improve my manners and give me social tone. She took some pains to do so, and tried to teach me to do the honours of her house; but I was such an awkward pupil, so bashful and so stupid, that she lost heart and gave me up. That did not prevent me from following my usual custom, and falling in love with her. I behaved in such a way as to make myself noticeable, but I never had the courage to declare myself and she was not disposed to make the advances. So my sighs and ogling glances were in vain, and I soon tired of them, when I saw that they were leading to nothing.

At Mamma's I had completely lost my habit of petty thieving; since everything was mine I had nothing to steal. Moreover the lofty principles I had adopted ought to have made me superior to such meannesses; indeed from that time I have generally been so. But that is not so much because I have learnt to conquer my temptations as that I have cut them down at the root; and I should be in some danger of stealing as I did in my childhood, were I subject to the same greeds as I was in those days. I had a proof of that at M. de Mably's. Surrounded by small objects which I could have pilfered but hardly even looked at, I was seized with a strange fancy for a certain very pleasant, light white wine from Arbois, of which I had drunk an occasional glass at table and which I had found quite delicious. It was a little cloudy, and I prided myself on my skill in clarifying wine. So this Arbois was entrusted me. I clarified it, and spoiled it; but only to the eye. For it still remained pleasant to drink, and I appropriated a few bottles of it every now and then, to consume at my leisure in my own room. Unfortunately I have never been able to drink on an empty stomach. How was I to get hold of some bread? I could not possibly put any aside. If I sent a lackey to buy it I should give myself away and that would almost be an insult to the master of the house. But how could a fine gentleman with a sword at his side go into a baker's to buy a hunk of bread? Finally I remembered the way out suggested by a great princess when told that the peasants had no bread: 'Well, let them eat cake.' But what pains it cost me to get even that! I would go out alone for the purpose, and sometimes walk the whole town, passing thirty confectioners before going into one. There had to be only one person in the shop, and that person's features had to attract me greatly before I ventured across the threshold. But when once I had secured

my coveted little cake I went to get my bottle from the back of the cupboard. And what pleasant swigs I enjoyed there on my own, while reading a few pages of a novel! For it has always been a fancy of mine to read as I eat when I am on my own; it makes up for the lack of society. I devour a page and a mouthful alternately, and it is as if my book were dining with me.

I have never been intemperate or over-indulgent, nor was I ever drunk in my life. So my little thefts were not very risky. However, they were discovered; the bottles gave me away. Nothing was said about them, but I had no longer the management of the cellar. In the whole matter M. de Mably behaved honourably and sensibly. He was a very courteous man; beneath a severity of manner in keeping with his employment he concealed a really gentle disposition and a rare kind-heartedness. He was just and equitable and – strange though this may seem in a police officer – he was also most humane. When I realized his indulgence I became even more attached to him, and therefore remained longer in his house than I should otherwise have done. But in the end, disgusted by a professional job for which I was not fitted and by a most tiresome situation, I decided after a year's trial, during which I had spared no pains, to leave my pupils.* For I was quite convinced that I should never succeed in educating them properly. M. de Mably saw this himself just as well as I did. But I do not believe that he would ever have taken it upon himself to dismiss me if I had not spared him the trouble. Such an excess of consideration under circumstances of that kind is something I really cannot approve of.

What made my position even more unbearable was the comparison I was continually making between this and the state I had left: the remembrance of my beloved Charmettes, of my garden, my trees, my spring, and my orchard, and above all of her for whom I was made, and who breathed life into all the rest. When I thought of her, of our pleasures and our innocent life, my heart was racked, and there was a choking in my throat that deprived me of the courage to take any action. A hundred times I was violently tempted to leave on the spot, and return to her on foot. If I could have seen her just once again I should have been content to die at that moment. Finally I could no longer resist these tender memories, which summoned me back to her, at whatever cost. I told myself that I had not been patient enough, accommodating enough, affectionate enough; that I could live happily once more in the sweetest of friendship if I gave more of

[* In May 1741.]

myself to it than I had done before. I formed the finest plans in all the world, and longed to execute them. I left everything and gave everything up. I departed, I flew to her, and arrived in all the rapture of my early youth. Once more I was at her feet. Ah, I should have died of joy if I had found in her welcome, in her caresses, or rather in her heart, a quarter of the love which I had once found there, and which I brought back to her still.

How frightful are the illusions of human life! She received me once more with that kindness of heart which would be hers for so long as she lived. But I had returned to rediscover a past which no longer existed and which could not be reborn. I had scarcely been with her for half an hour when I felt that my old happiness was dead for ever. I found myself back in the distressing situation which had forced me to run away, and this without my being able to fix the blame on anyone. For at bottom Courtilles was not a bad fellow, and he seemed rather glad than sorry to see me back. But how could I bear to be superfluous beside her to whom I had once meant everything, and who could never cease to be everything to me? How could I live as a stranger in the house of my own mother? The sight of objects which had witnessed my past happiness made the comparison ever crueller. I should have suffered less in some other dwelling. But here the incessant return of so many sweet memories aggravated my sense of what I had lost. Consumed by vain regrets and a victim of the blackest melancholy, I resumed my habit of keeping to myself except at meal times. I shut myself up with my books and tried to find in them a useful distraction. Conscious that the peril I had so dreaded before was now imminent, I racked my brains once more in an endeavour to find in myself some means of meeting it when Mamma's resources were exhausted. I had so managed her household that things had gone on without getting worse. But since my time everything was changed. Her steward was a spendthrift. He wanted to cut a figure, to ride a good horse with fine trappings. He was fond of playing the nobleman in his neighbours' eyes, and was continually involved in enterprises he knew nothing about. Mamma's pension was eaten up in advance, the quarterly payments were mortgaged, the rent was in arrears, and debts were piling up. I foresaw that it would not be long before this pension was impounded, and perhaps stopped. In fact I could envisage only ruin and disaster; and so close did they seem that I felt all their horrors in anticipation.

My dear little room was my only distraction. At first I sought a

cure for my own troubled spirit, but finally it occurred to me to seek some remedy against these disasters I foresaw. I returned to my old ideas and started building fresh castles in Spain, dreaming of how I might relieve my poor Mamma from the cruel plight into which I saw her on the point of falling. I did not feel that I had sufficient learning, nor did I believe myself to have the genius to shine in the republic of letters and make a fortune in that way. But a new idea occurred to me, and inspired me with the confidence that the mediocrity of my talents could not give me. I had not given up music when I gave up teaching it. On the contrary, I had made sufficient study of the theory to consider myself an expert on the subject. When I thought of the trouble I had had in learning to read the notes, and of the trouble I still had in sight-reading I began to think that the difficulties might be due to the subject rather than to myself; especially as I knew that learning music comes easily to no one. When I looked at the way in which it was written, I found that much of the notation was a very poor invention. A long time before I had thought of marking the scale by numbers, so as to avoid the necessity of always drawing lines and staves before you could put down the slightest little tune. I had been held up by the difficulty of the octaves, and the time, and the values of the notes. This old idea came back into my head, and when I thought it over again I saw that the difficulties were not insuperable. I worked it out successfully, and succeeded in transcribing music of any sort by means of my numbers with the greatest ease in the world. From that moment I thought of my fortune as made; and in my eagerness to share it with her to whom I owed it all, I thought only of going to Paris. For I did not doubt that when I put my scheme before the Academy it would cause a revolution. I had brought some money back from Lyons, and I sold my books. Within a fortnight of making my resolution I had carried it out. So, full of the grandiose ideas which had inspired it, and quite unchanged by the passage of time, I left Savoy with my system of notation as once I had set out from Turin with my heron-fountain.

Such were the errors and faults of my youth. I have related the story of them with a fidelity that brings pleasure to my heart. If, in later years, I have amassed any virtues to grace my maturity, I should have declared them with equal frankness, for such was my purpose. But I must stop here. Time may lift many veils; and if my memory descends to posterity perhaps one day it will learn what there was in me to say. Then it will be understood why I am silent.

June 11

THE
Second Part

*



BOOK SEVEN

1741 After two years of patient silence, in spite of my resolutions I take up the pen once more. Suspend your judgment, reader, as to the reasons that force me to it. You cannot judge them till you have read me to the end.

You have seen my peaceful youth flow by in a uniform and pleasant enough way, without great set-backs or remarkable spells of prosperity. This middling state of things was largely the result of my ardent but feeble nature, which was more easily discouraged than roused to activity, which quitted its repose when rudely shocked but soon relapsed into it again out of lassitude and natural inclination, and which, whilst keeping me far from the great virtues and even farther from the great vices, always brought me back to the quiet and idle life for which I felt I had been born, never allowing me to achieve anything of importance, either good or bad.

What a different picture I shall soon have to fill in! After favouring my wishes for thirty years, for the next thirty fate opposed them; and from this continual opposition between my situation and my desires will be seen to arise great mistakes, incredible misfortunes, and every virtue that can do credit to adversity except strength of character.

My first part has been entirely written from memory, and I must have made many mistakes in it. Being compelled to write the second from memory also, I shall now probably make still more. The sweet memories of my best years, passed in equal innocence and calm, have left me a thousand charming impressions that I love ceaselessly to recall. It will speedily be seen how different are the recollections of the rest of my life. To recall them is to relive their bitterness. Far from increasing the painfulness of my situation by such sad retrospects, I dismiss them in so far as I can; and I often succeed so well that I cannot recapture them when I need them. This ease with which I forget misfortunes is a consolation contrived for me by Heaven in the midst of all those evils that fate was one day to pile upon my head. Since my memory calls up only pleasant objects, it acts as the happy counterpoise to my fearful imagination, which makes me foresee nothing in the future but cruel disasters.

The papers that I had collected to make good the defects in my

memory and to guide me in this undertaking have all passed into other hands and will never return into mine. I have only one faithful guide on which I can count; the succession of feelings which have marked the development of my being, and thereby recall the events that have acted upon it as cause or effect. I easily forget my misfortunes, but I cannot forget my faults, and still less my genuine feelings. The memory of them is too dear ever to be effaced from my heart. I may omit or transpose facts, or make mistakes in dates; but I cannot go wrong about what I have felt, or about what my feelings have led me to do; and these are the chief subjects of my story. The true object of my confessions is to reveal my inner thoughts exactly in all the situations of my life. It is the history of my soul that I have promised to recount, and to write it faithfully I have need of no other memories; it is enough if I enter again into my inner self, as I have done till now.

There is, however, most fortunately a period of from six to seven years about which I have sure information in a collection of transcripts from original letters in the care of M. du Peyrou. This collection, which ends in 1760, covers the whole time of my stay at the Hermitage, and of my great quarrel with my self-styled friends: a memorable epoch in my life, which gave birth to all my other misfortunes. As for any more recent letters which I may still possess, and which are very few in number, instead of copying them out and adding them to that collection, which is too voluminous for me to hope to save it from the vigilance of my Arguses, I will incorporate them into this work itself, when they seem to provide any explanation, whether to my advantage or to my disadvantage. For I have no fear of my reader's forgetting that I am writing my confessions and supposing that I am making my apologia. But he must not expect that I shall conceal the truth either, when it speaks in my favour.

Besides, this truth is all that this second part has in common with the first, and the only advantage which the sequel can claim over its forerunner is the greater importance of the events it describes. In all other respects it will be inferior in every way. I wrote the first part with pleasure at Wootton or in the Château of Trye;* and every memory I had to recall was such a fresh delight. I returned to them again and again with renewed pleasure, and I was able to revise my descriptions at my ease until I was satisfied with them. To-day my

[* Belonging to the Prince de Conti with whom Rousseau stayed after leaving England.]

enfeebled brain and memory make me almost incapable of work, and I am only undertaking this task under compulsion, with a heart oppressed by grief. It can offer me nothing but misfortunes, treasons, perfidies, and sad, heart-rending recollections; and I would give everything in the world if I could enshroud what I have to say in the darkness of time. Being forced to speak in spite of myself, I am also obliged to conceal myself, to be cunning, to try to deceive, and to abase myself to conduct that is not in my nature. The ceiling under which I live has eyes, the walls that enclose me have ears. Uneasy and distracted, surrounded by spies and by vigilant and malevolent watchers, I hurriedly put on paper a few disjointed sentences that I have hardly time to re-read, let alone to correct. I know that despite the huge barriers which are ceaselessly erected all round me, they are always afraid that the truth will escape through some crack. How am I to set about piercing those barriers? I am attempting to do so, but with little hope of success. Judge whether this is stuff out of which pretty pictures can be made, or such as can colour them with attractive colours. I warn those who intend to begin this book, therefore, that nothing will save them from progressive boredom except the desire to complete their knowledge of a man, and a genuine love of truth and justice.

At the end of my first part I described myself regretfully setting out for Paris, but leaving my heart at Les Charmettes. There I had built my last castle in Spain, planning one day to bring back the riches I had gained and lay them at the feet of Mamma, who would be restored to her former glory, and counting on my system of musical notation as a sure means to fortune.

I stopped for some time at Lyons, to see my acquaintances, to procure some letters of introduction for Paris, and to sell my geometrical books, which I had brought with me. Everybody welcomed me. M. and Mme de Mably showed their pleasure at seeing me again and several times invited me to dinner. At their house I made the acquaintance of the Abbé de Mably,* as I had previously made that of the Abbé de Condillac, each of them having come to visit his brother. The Abbé de Mably gave me letters for Paris, among them one for M. de Fontenelle and one for the Count de Caylus. Both proved most pleasant acquaintances, particularly the former, who never ceased until his death to show me friendship and give me advice, when we were by ourselves, of which I ought to have made better use.

I saw M. Bordes again, whose acquaintance I had made long before

[* Gabriel Bonnot de Mably (historian and philosopher, 1709-85).]

and who had often assisted me most open-heartedly and with the most genuine pleasure. I found him on this occasion quite unchanged. It was he who helped me to sell my books, and himself gave me, or procured for me, some useful introductions for Paris. I saw the Intendant again, for whose acquaintance I was indebted to M. Bordes, and to whom I owed an introduction to the Duke de Richelieu, who passed through Lyons at that time. M. Pallu presented me to him, and M. de Richelieu received me very kindly, telling me to come and see him in Paris, which I did several times. But this distinguished acquaintance, of which I shall often have something to say in the sequel, has never been of any use to me.

I saw the musician David again, who had assisted me in my distress on one of my previous visits. He had lent or given me a cap and some stockings, which I have never returned to him and which he has never asked me for, though we have often met again since that time. Subsequently, however, I did make him a present of more or less equivalent value. I should have better things to say if it were a question of what I should have done; but I am speaking about what I did, and unfortunately that is not the same thing.

I saw the noble and generous Perrichon again, and not without receiving evidence of his usual munificence; for he gave me the same present as he had once given to 'the noble' Bernard;* he paid the cost of my place in the coach. I saw Parisot the surgeon, the best and most benevolent of men; I saw his beloved Godefroi, whom he had kept for ten years, and whose gentle nature and kindness of heart were almost her only virtues, but for whom one felt sympathy the moment one met her and whom one never left without regret; for she was in the last stages of a consumption of which she died shortly afterwards. Nothing is better evidence of a man's true inclinations than the character of those whom he loves.† Once one had met the gentle Godefroi one knew all about that good man Parisot.

[* Pierre-Joseph Bernard (1710-75), a minor poet so nicknamed by Voltaire.]

† Unless at the outset he is deceived in his choice, or the person for whom he has formed an attachment afterwards changes her character through a concatenation of extraordinary circumstances – which is not absolutely impossible. If this rule were admitted without modification, Socrates would have to be judged by his wife Xantippe, and Dion by his friend Calippus, which would be the falsest and unfairest judgement ever passed. Further, let there be no insulting application of this to my wife. She is, it is true, more limited and more gullible than I had supposed; but her pure, excellent, and guileless nature has earned my entire esteem, and will have it for so long as I live.

Though I was indebted to all these worthy people, I afterwards neglected them all, certainly not out of ingratitude, but owing to my invincible laziness, which has often made me seem ungrateful. The remembrance of their kindnesses has never been out of my mind; but it would have cost me less to prove my gratitude by deeds than to give them assiduous evidence of it in words. Regular correspondence has always been beyond my powers. As soon as I begin to lose interest, shame and embarrassment prevent me from repairing my negligence. Instead, I make things worse and cease to write altogether. I have remained silent therefore, and appear to have forgotten them. Parisot and Perrichon have not even noticed my neglect, and I have always found them unchanged. But it will be seen, twenty years later, in the case of M. Bordes, how far the vanity of a wit can carry his vengeance when he thinks himself slighted.

Before I leave Lyons I must not forget one charming creature whom I saw again with more pleasure than ever, and who left the tenderest of memories in my heart. That is Mlle Serre, whom I mentioned in my First Part, and with whom I had renewed acquaintance while I was at M. de Mably's. Having more leisure on this visit, I saw more of her. My heart was stirred and most strongly; and I had reason to think that hers also was not unmoved. But she entrusted me with a confidence which robbed me of all temptation to abuse it. She had no money, nor had I. Our situations were too similar for us to unite; and with the ideas that then occupied my mind I was far from thinking of marriage. She informed me that M. Genève, a young merchant, seemed anxious to win her affections. I saw him once or twice at her house. He seemed a decent fellow, which he had the reputation of being. I was convinced, therefore, that she would be happy with him, and I wanted him to marry her, which he afterwards did. So, in order not to disturb their innocent affections, I hurriedly set out, offering up prayers for the happiness of this charming creature, which were, alas, only answered for a very short time here below. For I subsequently heard that she died after three or four years of marriage. Preoccupied throughout my journey by tender regrets, I felt, as I have often felt since on thinking it over, that though the sacrifices one performs to duty and virtue are costly to make, one is amply repaid by the sweet memories they leave at the bottom of one's heart.

The aspect of Paris that I saw on this visit was as brilliant as on my former journey it had been the reverse; not however in the matter of

my lodging. For I used an address M. Bordes had given me and put up at the Hôtel Saint-Quentin, in the Rue des Cordeliers, near the Sorbonne: a wretched street, a wretched hotel, and a wretched room. Yet men of merit had lodged here, such men as Gresset, Bordes, the Abbé de Mably, the Abbé de Condillac, and several others, none of whom unfortunately I found still there. But I did find a M. de Bonnefond, a lame country squire, who was given to litigation and set himself up as a purist. To him I owed the acquaintance of M. Roguin,* now the oldest of my friends, and through him I met the philosopher Diderot, of whom I shall have much to say hereafter.

I arrived in Paris in the autumn of 1741, with fifteen *louis* in ready money, and with my comedy *Narcissus* and my scheme of notation as my sole resources. I had consequently not much time to lose before trying to turn them to some advantage. I hurried to make use of my introductions. A young man who arrives in Paris with a decent appearance and advertises himself by his talents is always sure of a welcome. My good reception procured me some pleasures but did not lead to anything much. Of all the people to whom I was introduced only three were useful to me: M. Damesin, a gentleman from Savoy, at that time the equerry and, I believe, the favourite of the Princess de Carignan; M. de Boze, secretary to the Academy of Archaeology, and keeper of the King's collection of medals; and Father Castel, a Jesuit and the inventor of the colour-keyboard.† All these introductions, except that to M. Damesin, had been given me by Abbé de Mably.

M. Damesin supplied my most urgent needs by procuring me two acquaintances, M. de Gasc, president of the Courts of Bordeaux and a fine violinist, and the Abbé de Léon, a very charming young gentleman who was then living at the Sorbonne and who died in his prime, after cutting a brief but brilliant figure in the world under the name of the Chevalier de Rohan. Both of them had a fancy to learn composition, and I gave them each lessons for some months, which somewhat replenished my depleted purse. The Abbé de Léon felt friendly towards me, and wanted to take me as his secretary. But he was not rich, and could only offer me eight hundred francs in all, which I very reluctantly refused. For that would not have been enough to pay my

[* Daniel Roguin (1691-1771), a Swiss who had been in Dutch service.]

[† An instrument for producing colour harmonies; the primary colours, corresponding to the seven notes of the scale, were projected by the notes of a keyboard similar to that of a harpsichord.]

lodging, my food, and my subsistence. M. de Boze received me most kindly. He loved learning, and had some knowledge, but he was something of a pedant. Mme de Boze might have been his daughter; she was precious and brilliant. I dined with them sometimes, and it would have been impossible for anyone to look stupider or more awkward than I did in her presence. Her easy manner intimidated me, and made my own even more absurd. When she handed me a dish I put out my fork and took a modest morsel of what she offered me. Whereupon she gave the dish she had intended for me back to her lackey and turned away to hide her smile. She did not suspect that there was some little wit in the head of her rustic guest all the same. M. de Boze introduced me to his friend M. de Réaumur,* who dined with him every Friday, the day the Academy of Sciences met. He talked to him of my scheme and of my desire to submit it to the Academy for examination. M. de Réaumur undertook the negotiations and my request was accepted. On the day fixed I was introduced and presented by M. de Réaumur, and on that same day, August 22nd, 1742, I had the honour of reading to the Academy the paper I had prepared for that purpose. Although that illustrious assembly was certainly most imposing, I was much less nervous than in the presence of Mme de Boze; and I got through my reading and examination fairly well. The paper was a success, and brought me compliments that surprised me as much as they flattered me, for I hardly imagined that in the eyes of an Academy, anyone who was not a member would appear to possess even common sense. The commission appointed to examine me consisted of M. de Mairan, M. Hellot, and M. de Fouchy, all three certainly distinguished men. But not one of them knew enough about music to be capable of judging my scheme.

1742 During my conversations with those gentlemen I discovered, with no less certainty than surprise, that if learned men have sometimes less prejudices than others, they cling more tenaciously to those they have, as a compensation. However weak and false most of their objections were, and however decisively I answered them – though timidly, I admit, and in ill-chosen words – I never once succeeded in satisfying them or in making myself clear. I was always astounded by the ease with which they refuted my arguments with the help of a few high-sounding phrases, without

[* René-Antoine Ferchault de Réaumur, doctor and scientist (1683–1757).]

in the least understanding them. They unearthed from somewhere a certain Father Souhaitti, a monk who had once had the idea of expressing notes by numbers. This was enough to persuade them that my system was not new. That may be so. For though I had never heard of Father Souhaitti, and though his way of writing the seven notes of the plain-song with no reference to the octaves was in no sense comparable to my simple and convenient system of notation by figures, which was easily applicable to all imaginable tunes, keys, rests, octaves, bars, time, and values of notes – a matter of which Souhaitti had not even thought – it was nevertheless quite true to say that, so far as the elementary transcription of the seven notes is concerned, he was the original inventor. But not only did they attribute more importance to his primitive invention than it deserved; they went further than that, and as soon as they tried to speak of the fundamental principles of my system, talked nothing but nonsense. Its great advantage was that it did away with transposition and keys, so that a piece of music required only to be written down, and it could be transposed at will into any desired key, by an imaginary change in the single initial letter at the top of the page. These gentlemen had heard it said by hack musicians in Paris that the method of playing by transposition was worthless, and from there they went on to turn my system's most striking advantage into an invincible objection. They decided that it was good for vocal music but bad for instrumental, instead of concluding, as they should have done, that it was good for vocal music, but better for instrumental. As a result of their report the Academy granted me a certificate packed with very fine compliments, between the lines of which anyone could read that in reality they considered my system neither new nor useful. I did not feel compelled to append this document as an ornament to the work entitled *A Dissertation on Modern Music* in which I appealed direct to the public.

I had reason to observe on this occasion how, even in a person of limited intelligence, an exclusive but profound knowledge of a subject is a greater aid to correct judgement than any learning derived from scientific principles when it is not combined with the particular study of the subject under consideration. The only serious objection to be made against my system was made by Rameau. He saw its weak side the moment I explained it to him. 'Your notation', he said, 'is excellent in so far as it determines the value of notes simply and clearly, accurately represents the intervals and always shows the original phrase and its doubling together, all things that common

notation does not do. But it is bad in so far as it demands a mental process which cannot always keep up with the rapidity of the execution. The position of our notes', he continued, 'springs to the eye without the assistance of the mind. If two notes, one very high and the other very low, are joined by a passage of intermediate notes, I can see at a glance the progress from one to the other down the scale. But in order to make sure of the passage in your notation I have to decipher all your numbers one after the other; a general glance will not do.' His objection seemed irrefutable, and I instantly admitted it; although it is simple and striking it is one that only great experience of the art could have lighted on. It is not surprising that it did not occur to any of the Academicians. But it is strange that all these great scholars who know so many things are still not aware that nobody is capable of judging anything outside his own field.

My frequent visits to my examiners and to other Academicians enabled me to make the acquaintance of all the most distinguished literary men in Paris. I knew them already, therefore, when subsequently I suddenly found myself a member of their profession. For the present, however, being entirely absorbed in my system of notation, I persisted in my endeavours to make a revolution in that art, and thus to attain a celebrity, which in Paris is always accompanied by a fortune, if it is attained in the arts. I shut myself up in my room and worked for two or three months with indescribable ardour, at recasting the paper I had read to the Academy in the form of a book intended for the general public. The trouble was to find a bookseller who would publish my manuscript, seeing that there would be some expense involved in printing the new characters, and that booksellers never throw their money into the laps of beginners, although it seemed only right to me that my work should return me the bread I had eaten whilst writing it.

Bonnefond found me the elder Quillan, who made an agreement with me for half profits, excluding the licence, for which I had to pay myself. Such was the conduct of the aforesaid Quillan that I lost the cost of my licence and did not make a farthing on the whole edition, which probably had poor sales, although the Abbé Desfontaines had promised to push it, and the rest of the journalists had spoken fairly well of it.

The greatest impediment to a trial of my system was the fact that if it were not adopted the time spent in learning it would be wasted. My reply to this was that practice in my notation made the general

ideas so clear that even if one were going to learn music by the common method, one would save time by beginning with mine. To demonstrate this by experiment, I taught music free of charge to Mlle des Roulins, a young American, who had been introduced to me by M. Roguin. After three months of my notation she was able to read music of all kinds, and even to read at sight better than I could myself anything that was not swarming with difficulties. This was a striking success, but did not become known. Anyone else would have filled the newspapers with it, but though I had some talent for useful inventions I never had any for turning them to account.

Thus my heron-fountain was broken again. But this second time I was thirty and on the streets of Paris, where one does not live for nothing. The resolution I formed in this extremity will only astonish those who have not read the first part of my memoirs with care. I had just been making efforts which were as great as they were fruitless. Now I needed a breathing space. Instead of surrendering to despair, I gave myself over to my own laziness and into the care of Providence; and to allow Him time to do His work, I began unhurriedly to consume the few *louis* remaining to me, regulating the expense of my careless pleasures but not giving them up, going to the café only every other day, and to the play only twice a week. As for money spent on women I had no retrenchment to make, having never spent a *sou* in this way, except on an occasion of which I shall soon have to speak.

The security, indulgence, and confidence with which I gave myself up to this indolent and solitary life, which I had not the money to pursue for three months, is one of the peculiarities in my life, one of the eccentricities of my nature. My extreme need that someone should help me was precisely what robbed me of the courage to appear in public; and the necessity of paying calls made them so unbearable to me that I ceased even to see the Academicians and men of letters with whom I was already on terms. Marivaux, the Abbé de Mably, and Fontenelle were almost the only men whom I continued sometimes to visit. I even showed Marivaux my comedy *Narcissus*. He liked it, and was so kind as to touch it up. Diderot, who was younger than they, was more or less of my age. He was fond of music, and knew the theory; we talked music together, and he also talked to me of the works he had planned. This soon led to closer relations between us, which lasted for fifteen years and would probably have lasted longer if unfortunately, and through his own fault, I had not been thrown into the same profession as himself.

No one will guess how I spent this short and precious interval which still remained to me before being compelled to beg my bread. I learned by heart passages from poets that I had learnt a hundred times and forgotten as often. Every morning at about ten I used to walk in the Luxembourg Gardens, with a Virgil and a Rousseau in my pocket; and there, until dinner-time, I recommitted to memory a sacred ode or an eclogue, without being discouraged by the fact that as I repeated one day's task I invariably forgot what I had learned the day before. I remembered that after the defeat of Nicias at Syracuse the Athenian prisoners obtained a livelihood by reciting the poems of Homer. The moral which I drew from this tale of erudition was that I must exercise my excellent memory in learning all the poets by heart, in order to prepare myself against poverty.

I had another equally sound expedient in the game of chess, to which I devoted myself regularly at the Café Maugis, on the afternoons of the days I did not go to the play. There I made the acquaintance of M. de Légal, of M. Husson, of Philidor, and of all the great chess players of that time, without however improving my game thereby. But I had no doubt that in the end I should be better than any of them; and that, in my opinion, would be a sufficient resource. Whatever craze I contracted, I always applied the same method of reasoning to it. 'Anyone who excels in something', I told myself, 'is always sure to be sought after. So let us excel, never mind in what. I shall be sought after, opportunities will present themselves, and my merit will do the rest.' This childish sophistry was not the product of my reason but of my indolence. Afraid of the great and speedy efforts that any real and violent enterprise would have required of me, I tried to find excuses for my idleness, and concealed my shameful conduct from myself by means of arguments equally shameful.

Thus I calmly waited for my money to give out, and I believe that I should have come to my last *sou* without any further uneasiness if Father Castel, whom I called on sometimes on my way to the café, had not roused me from my lethargy. Father Castel was a madman, but otherwise a good fellow, and he was sorry to see me wasting away in idleness. 'Since musicians and theorists will not sing in unison with you, change your string and try the women. Perhaps you will have better success in that quarter. I have mentioned you to Mme de Beuzenval; go and see her, and say I sent you. She is a good woman and will be pleased to meet a fellow countryman of her son's and her husband's. You will meet her daughter, Mme de Broglie, at her

house, and she is an intelligent person. And I have mentioned you to someone else, to Mme Dupin. Take her your work. She is anxious to see you and will give you a good welcome. Nothing is achieved in Paris except by help of the ladies. They are, so to speak, the circumference to which learned men, like so many asymptotes,* draw ever nearer, yet which they never touch.'

After postponing these terrible duties from one day to the next, I finally took courage and went to see Mme de Beuzenval. She received me most kindly, and said to Mme de Broglie, who came into her room while I was there: 'My dear, this is M. Rousseau, whom Father Castel told us about.' Mme de Broglie complimented me on my work and, taking me over to her clavichord, showed me that she had been studying it. Seeing from the clock that it was nearly one, I attempted to take my leave. But Mme de Beuzenval said: 'You are a long way from where you live. Stop and you shall dine here.' I took no persuading. A quarter of an hour afterwards I realized from something she said that the dinner she had invited me to was in the servants' hall. Mme de Beuzenval was a very good woman, but so limited and so full of her illustrious Polish nobility that she had little idea of the respect due to talent. On this particular occasion she judged me by my manner rather than by my clothes which, simple though they were, were very neat and did not in the least suggest a man who ought to dine in the servants' hall. I had forgotten my way there too long ago to be willing to relearn it. Without showing how annoyed I was, I told Mme de Beuzenval that I had just remembered a small matter which compelled me to return home, and that I must go. Mme de Broglie then went up to her mother and whispered something in her ear, which had its effect. For Mme de Beuzenval got up to prevent me, and said, 'I am sure you will do us the honour of dining *with us*.' I thought that a display of pride would be sheer foolishness and stayed. Moreover, I was touched by Mme de Broglie's kindness, and felt attracted towards her. I was very glad to be dining with her, and I hoped that when she knew me better she would not be sorry she had procured me that honour. President Lamoignon, a great friend of the family, was dining there also. Both he and Mme de Broglie talked the fashionable Paris jargon, full of diminutives and subtle little allusions, which afforded poor Jean-Jacques little chance of shining. I had the good sense not to try and play the wit when sitting opposite Minerva, and kept silent. It would have been well if

[* Tangents which meet the curve at infinity.]

I had always been as sensible. I should not then be in the abyss in which I am to-day.

I was distressed by my dullness, and by my inability to justify in Mme de Broglie's eyes the favour she had done me. After dinner my usual resource occurred to me. I had in my pocket an epistle in verse I had written to Parisot during my stay in Lyons. The piece was not lacking in fire, which I exaggerated by my manner of reading it, and I moved all three to tears. Whether it was my vanity or the truth that made me so interpret it, I seemed to read in Mme de Broglie's glance: 'Well, Mamma, was I wrong when I said that this man was fitter to dine with you than with your servant-women?' Up to that moment my heart had been somewhat heavy. But after thus taking my revenge I was content. Mme de Broglie carried the favourable opinion she had formed of me rather too far. She concluded that I was going to make a sensation in Paris and would become a favourite with the ladies. To guide my inexperience she gave me the *Confessions of the Count de X X X*. 'This book', she told me, 'is a mentor that you will need in society. You will do well to consult it sometimes.' I have kept the copy more than twenty years out of gratitude to the hand that gave it to me, but I have often laughed at the opinion that lady seemed to have of my capacity for gallantry. Directly I read that book, I desired the friendship of its author. This fancy was truly inspired; he is the only real friend I have had amongst men of letters.*

From that time I confidently reckoned that the Baroness de Beuzenval and the Marchioness de Broglie, having taken an interest in me, would not leave me long unprovided for, and I was not wrong. But now let us speak of my introduction to Mme Dupin, which had more lasting consequences.

Mme Dupin, as is well known, was the daughter of Samuel Bernard and Mme Fontaine. There were three sisters, who might be called the Three Graces: Mme de La Touche, who ran off to England with the Duke of Kingston; Mme d'Arty, the mistress and, what is more, the friend, the only true friend, of the Prince de Conti – a woman adorable not only for her gentleness, and for her kind and charming nature, but for the pleasant wit and the invariable cheerfulness of her disposition; and lastly, there was Mme Dupin, the loveliest of the

* I believed this so implicitly over so long a time that it was to him I entrusted the manuscript of my *Confessions* after my return to Paris. The distrustful Jean-Jacques has never been able to believe in perfidy and falsehood until he has been the victim of it.

three, and the only one against whose conduct there has been no shadow of reproach. M. Dupin had received her hand as a reward for his hospitality. For her mother had given her to him in marriage, together with a post of farmer general and an immense fortune, out of gratitude for the kind welcome he had given her when she visited his province. When I saw her for the first time she was still one of the most beautiful women in Paris. She received me in her dressing-room. Her arms were bare, her hair dishevelled, and her dressing-jacket loose. Such an introduction was quite new to me. My poor head could not stand up to it. I grew troubled and confused. In short, I fell in love with her.

My confusion did not seem to prejudice me in her eyes; she did not notice it at all. She received the book and the author, spoke to me of my scheme as one who understood it, sang, accompanied herself on the clavichord, kept me to dinner, and made me sit beside her at table. This was more than enough to lose me my wits; I lost them. She allowed me to visit her. I availed myself of her permission and abused it. I went there nearly every day, and dined there twice or three times a week. I was dying to speak, but never dared. Several reasons increased my natural shyness. Entry into a wealthy house was an open door to fortune. I dared not, in my situation, risk its being closed to me. Amiable though Mme Dupin was, she was serious and cold; and I found nothing in her behaviour inviting enough to embolden me. Her house was as brilliant at that time as any in Paris, and frequented by company which, if it had been a little less numerous, would have been the cream of all society. She liked to receive everyone of any brilliance – noblemen, men of letters, and beautiful women. Only dukes, ambassadors, and men with decorations were to be seen at her house. The Princess de Rohan, the Countess de Forcalquier, Mme de Mirepoix, Mme de Brignolé, and Lady Hervey passed as her friends. M. de Fontenelle, the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, the Abbé Sallier, M. de Fourmont, M. de Bernis, M. de Buffon, and M. de Voltaire were members of her circle and came to her dinners. Though her reserved manner did not attract many young people, her company was more select and no less impressive for that; and poor Jean-Jacques had no reason to flatter himself that he cut much of a figure in such surroundings. I dared not speak therefore; but being unable to be silent, I dared to write. She kept my letter for two days without saying a word to me about it. Then on the third day she returned it, admonishing me briefly in tones of such coldness that my blood froze. I tried to speak, but the

words died on my lips; my sudden passion was extinguished with my hopes; and after a formal declaration I continued to visit her as before, without so much as speaking to her, even with my eyes.

I thought that my folly was forgotten, but I was wrong. M. de Francueil, M. Dupin's son and Madame's stepson, was more or less of her age and mine. He was witty and handsome, and might have aimed high. It was said that he aspired to his stepmother's favours, though this was only because she had married him to a very plain and gentle wife, and lived on perfect terms with them both. M. de Francueil admired talent, and cultivated it in himself. He had a good knowledge of music, which formed a kind of bond between us. I saw a great deal of him, and had already grown fond of him when suddenly he gave me to understand that Mme Dupin found my visits too frequent and begged me to discontinue them. Such a compliment would not have been untimely when she returned me my letter; but eight or ten days later, and without any further cause, it was, I think, misplaced. What made the situation even more curious was that I was no less welcome than before at M. and Mme de Francueil's. I went there less often, however; and I should have entirely ceased to visit them if, by another strange caprice, Mme Dupin had not begged me to take charge of her son for eight or ten days, since he was changing his tutor and would be left on his own during that time. I spent the week in an agony that would have been unbearable but for my pleasure in obliging Mme Dupin. For poor Chenonceaux had already the unfortunate temper which narrowly escaped bringing dishonour on his family, and which subsequently led him to his death on the Île de Bourbon. Whilst I was with him I prevented his harming himself or anyone else, and that is all; but that was no small task, and I would not have undertaken another week of it if Mme Dupin had given herself to me as a reward.

M. de Francueil conceived a friendship for me, and I worked with him. Together we began a course in chemistry under Rouelle. To be nearer him, I left my Hôtel Saint-Quentin and went to lodge at the tennis court in the Rue Verdelet, which leads into the Rue Plâtrière, where M. Dupin lived. There, in consequence of a neglected cold, I contracted an inflammation of the lungs, of which I almost died. In my youth I frequently suffered from inflammatory diseases, pleurisies, and, especially, quinsies, to which I was very subject. I have not kept count of them here, but each one of them has given me a close enough glimpse of death to familiarize me with its looks. During my

convalescence I had time to reflect on my condition, and to deplore my timorousness, my weakness and indolence which, despite the fire I felt burning in me, left me languishing in idleness of spirit, perpetually on the verge of penury. On the evening before the day on which I fell ill I had gone to an opera of Royer's, which was then being played, the title of which I have forgotten. Despite my bias in favour of other men's talents, which has always made me distrust my own, I could not help feeling that his music was feeble, and lacking in both fire and originality. Sometimes I even dared to say to myself: 'I think I could do better than that.' But my own terror of operatic composition and the importance I heard attached to the art by gentlemen of the profession immediately discouraged me and made me blush at having dared even to think of it. Besides, where should I find anyone willing to write me the words, to take the trouble to adapt them for me? These ideas of music and opera came back to me during my illness, and at the height of my fever I composed songs, duets, and choruses. I am certain that I composed two or three pieces, impromptu, which might have won the admiration of the masters if they could have heard them played. Oh, if one could keep only a record of a feverish man's dreams, what grand and sublime things would sometimes be seen to result from his delirium!

These same subjects – music and the opera – continued to occupy me during my convalescence, but less violently. After long and sometimes involuntary brooding I decided to explore the whole matter, and to try to compose an opera of my own, both the words and the music. It was not altogether my first attempt. At Chambéry I had written an operatic tragedy entitled *Iphis and Anaxaretes*, which I had been sensible enough to throw into the fire. At Lyons I had composed another, entitled *The Discovery of the New World*; and after reading it to M. Bordes, the Abbé de Mably, the Abbé Trublet and some others, I finally treated it in the same way, although I had already written the music of the prologue and the first act, which David had told me, when I showed it to him, contained passages worthy of Buononcini.

On this occasion, before setting to work I gave myself time to consider my plans. I sketched out an heroic ballet, treating three different subjects in three separate acts, each in its own style of music. Each subject dealt with the love of a poet, and I called the opera *The Gallant Muses*. My first act, in the grand manner, was given to Tasso; the second, which was tender in mood, to Ovid; the third, entitled

'Anacreon', was intended to breathe a dithyrambic gaiety. As a start, I tried myself out on the first act, and devoted myself to it so wholeheartedly that for the first time in my life I knew the delights of impetuous composition. One evening just as I was going into the opera house, I felt myself so racked and over-mastered by my ideas that I put my money back in my pocket, ran home, and shut myself in my room. When I had pulled all my curtains to cut out the light of day, I threw myself on the bed, and there, entirely abandoning myself to the poetic and musical gadfly, I composed the greater part of my act rapidly, in seven or eight hours. I may say that my love for the Princess of Ferrara – for I was the Tasso at that moment – and my proud and noble feelings when confronting her unjust brothers made my night a hundred times more delicious than if I had spent it in the arms of the princess herself. In the morning only a very small part of what I had composed remained in my head. But that little, almost obliterated by weariness and sleep, nevertheless testified to the vigour of that whole of which it was the remains.

This time I did not carry my work very far, for I was deflected by other matters. Whilst I was growing attached to the Dupin family, Mme de Beuzenval and Mme de Broglie – whom I continued to visit occasionally – had not forgotten me. The Count de Montaigu, a captain in the Guards, had just been made ambassador at Venice, which appointment he owed to Barjac,* to whom he paid assiduous court. His brother, the Chevalier de Montaigu, gentleman-in-waiting to the young Dauphin, was an acquaintance of these two ladies and of the Abbé Alary of the French Academy, whom I sometimes saw. Mme de Broglie knew that the ambassador was looking for a secretary and proposed me. We entered into negotiation. I asked for fifty *louis*† as salary, which was little enough for a post in which one has to keep up appearances. He offered me a hundred *pistoles*,† and I was to make the journey at my own expense. The proposal was ridiculous, and we could not come to terms. M. de Francueil, who was trying hard to keep me back, won the day. I stayed, and M. de Montaigu departed, taking with him a secretary named M. Follau, who had been given to him by the Foreign Office. As soon as they reached Venice they quarrelled. Follau saw that he was dealing with a madman, and left him there in the lurch. Then M. de Montaigu, having no one but M. de Binis, a young priest who wrote under the secretary's instruc-

[* Valet to the Cardinal de Fleury.]

[† A *louis* was worth 24 francs, a *pistole* 10.]

tions and was not capable of taking his place, had recourse to me. His brother, the Chevalier, a clever man, by giving me to understand that there were privileges going with the secretaryship, made me change my mind and accept the thousand francs. I received twenty *louis* for my journey, and set out.

1743-1744 At Lyons I should have liked to take the Mont-Cénis route, so that I could have visited my poor Mamma on the way. But I went down the Rhône and boarded a ship at Toulon, on account of the war and for the sake of economy, and also in order to get a passport from M. de Mirepoix, who was then Commander in Provence, and to whom I had a letter of introduction. M. de Montaigu could not get on without me, and sent me letter after letter to hurry me on my way. One incident kept me back.

It was the time of the plague at Messina. The English fleet, which had anchored there, inspected the felucca on which I was. On arriving at Genoa, therefore, after a long and tiresome voyage, we were subjected to a quarantine of twenty-one days. The passengers were given the choice of spending that period on board or in the *lazaretto*, in which we were warned that we should find nothing but the bare walls, for they had not yet had time to furnish it. Everyone else chose the felucca. But the unbearable heat, the confined space, the impossibility of taking exercise, and the vermin made me prefer the *lazaretto* at all costs. I was led into a large two-storied building, absolutely bare, in which I found neither window nor table nor bed nor chair, not even a stool to sit on, nor a bundle of hay on which to lie. They brought me my cloak, my travelling bag, and my two trunks; the great doors with their huge locks were shut upon me, and I was left at liberty to walk as I would from room to room and up and down stairs; and everywhere I found the same bare solitude.

All this did not make me sorry that I had chosen the *lazaretto* rather than the felucca. Like another Robinson Crusoe I started making arrangements for my twenty-one days, as if it were for my whole life. First I had the amusement of catching the fleas I had picked up in the felucca. When by a change of clothing and linen I had finally got rid of these, I went on to furnish the room which I had chosen for myself. I made myself a good mattress out of my waistcoats and shirts, some sheets from several napkins which I sewed together, a blanket

out of my dressing-gown, and a pillow from rolling up my cloak. I made myself a chair out of one trunk laid flat, and a table from the other set on end. I took out some paper and an inkstand. I arranged the dozen books I had with me as a library. In short, I so managed things that except in the matter of curtains and windows I was almost as comfortable in that absolutely bare *lazaretto* as at my tennis court in the Rue Verdelet. My meals were served with grand ceremony. Two grenadiers with fixed bayonets acted as the escort; the staircase was my dining-room, the bottom stair served me as a seat; and when my dinner was served, they rang a bell as they retired, as a signal for me to sit down to table. Between my meals, when I was not reading or writing or attending to my furnishings, I used to walk in the Protestant cemetery, which served me as a courtyard, or climb a lantern which overlooked the port, and from which I could see the ships sail in and out. I spent fourteen days like this, and should have spent the whole twenty-one without a boring moment if M. de Jonville, the French ambassador, to whom I managed to send a letter, soaked in vinegar, perfumed and half burnt, had not got my period reduced by a week. I went to spend those days with him, and I was more comfortable, I admit, under his roof than lodging in the *lazaretto*. He was extremely kind to me; and Dupont, his secretary, was a good fellow. He took me to several houses, both at Genoa and in the country, where the company was quite amusing. I formed an acquaintance with him, and we started a correspondence which we kept up for quite a long time. Then I pleasantly pursued my way across Lombardy. I saw Milan, Verona, Brescia, and Padua, and finally reached Venice, where the ambassador was impatiently awaiting me.

I found piles of dispatches, both from the Court and from other embassies. He had not been able to read those that were in code, though he had all the necessary code books. Never having worked in an office of any sort, and never in my life having seen a ministerial cipher, I was first afraid that I might be at a loss. But I found that nothing could be simpler, and in under a week I had deciphered them all. They certainly were not worth the trouble; for not only is the Venetian embassy always fairly idle, but the ambassador was not the sort of man whom anyone would have entrusted with even the most trifling negotiations. He had been in a great fix until I arrived, for he could neither dictate nor write a legible hand. I was very useful to him, which he realized; and he treated me well. But he had another motive for doing so. After the retirement of his predecessor, M. de

Froulay, who had gone out of his mind, M. Le Blond, the French Consul, had taken charge of the embassy business, and this he continued to manage, now that M. de Montaignu had arrived, until such time as he should have instructed the newcomer in the duties. Although he was himself incapable, M. de Montaignu could not bear anyone else to do his work, took a dislike to the consul, and, as soon as I arrived, deprived him of his functions as secretary to the embassy in order to give them to me. The title and the functions going together, he told me to assume the former as well, and so long as I remained with him he never sent anyone else in a secretarial capacity either to the Senate or to its Foreign Officer. And really it was quite natural that he should have preferred to have his own man as secretary to the embassy, rather than a consul or a clerk nominated by the Court.

This made my position a tolerably pleasant one, and prevented his gentlemen, who were Italians, as were his pages and the majority of his people, from disputing my precedence in the house. I successfully wielded the authority which went with my position, to maintain his rights of protection, that is to say the inviolability of his quarters against attempts which were frequently made to violate them. But on the other hand I did not allow thieves to seek sanctuary there, although advantages might have accrued to me thereby, of which his Excellency would not have declined his share.

He even presumed to claim a part of the secretary's fees, which are called the chancellery dues. Although we were at war, there was no lack of applications for passports, for each of which a *sequin* was paid to the secretary who drew it up and countersigned it. All my predecessors had collected this *sequin* from Frenchmen and foreigners alike. I considered the practice inequitable and, although not a Frenchman myself, abolished it in the case of the French. But I exacted my fee so rigorously from everyone else, that when the Marquis Scotti, the brother of the Queen of Spain's favourite, sent a messenger to demand a passport without giving him my *sequin* I sent the man back to ask for it, a boldness which that vindictive Italian did not forget. As soon as the news got round that I had reformed the passport tax, my only applicants were crowds of pretended Frenchmen who claimed in abominable jargons to be either from Provence, Picardy, or Burgundy. As I have a fairly good ear I was not easily fooled, and I doubt whether a single Italian cheated me out of my *sequin*, or a single Frenchman paid it. I was stupid enough to tell

M. de Montaigu, who knew nothing about anything, what I had done. The word *sequin* made him prick up his ears. He did not comment on my abolition of the fee for Frenchmen, but demanded that I should account to him for the others, promising me equivalent advantages in return. Indignant at this meanness, rather than actuated by self-interest, I proudly rejected his proposal. He persisted, and I grew warm. 'No, sir,' I said to him with some spirit, 'let your Excellency keep what is yours and leave me what is mine. I will never hand you over a *sou*.' Seeing that he would gain nothing by this means he tried another, and had the effrontery to say that since I drew the profits of the chancellery I ought to pay its expenses. I did not want to wrangle on this subject; and from that time I paid out of my own pocket for the ink, paper, wax candles, and ribbon, and even the seal, which I ordered to be repaired without his ever reimbursing me a farthing. This did not prevent me from giving a small part of the revenue from passports to the Abbé de Binis, a good fellow, who had never thought of making any claim to it. He was obliging to me, I acted honestly by him, and we always got along very well together.

When I began my duties I found them less difficult than I had feared they might be, for an inexperienced man working under an equally inexperienced ambassador, who, moreover, out of ignorance and obstinacy, seemed deliberately to thwart anything that common sense and a little intelligence showed me might be useful in his interest and the King's. The most sensible thing he did was to ally himself with the Marquis de Mari, the Spanish ambassador, a skilful and subtle man, who could have led him by the nose if he had wished, but who, seeing the common interests of the two kingdoms, generally gave him good advice. But M. de Montaigu always spoilt things by adding some idea of his own when carrying de Mari's plans out. The one thing they had to do in common was to see that the Venetians maintained their neutrality, which they continually protested they were faithfully doing, whilst all the time openly providing the Austrian troops with munitions and even with recruits, who posed as deserters. M. de Montaigu, I believe, wanted to curry favour with the Republic and therefore, despite my remonstrances, never failed to make me state, in all his dispatches, that Venice would never violate her neutrality. The poor man's stubborn stupidity caused me to write nonsense and commit absurdities at every turn. I was obliged to be his agent in his follies, since he would have it so. But sometimes they made my duties unbearable, sometimes even almost too difficult

to perform. He absolutely insisted, for instance, that the greater part of his dispatches to the King and the minister should be in cipher, though neither contained anything whatever that required such a precaution. I protested that between Friday, when dispatches arrived from Court, and Saturday, when ours were sent off, there was not enough time to do all that ciphering and also to attend to the heavy correspondence which I had to have ready for the same courier. He found an excellent solution for this dilemma, which was to write his replies on Thursdays to the dispatches that would arrive the next day. Despite everything that I could say about the impracticability and the absurdity of his idea, he thought it so ingenious that I had to give in. So, all the time I was with him I would keep note of some odd words he might utter at random during the week and of a little trivial news which I would pick up here and there. Then, armed with this scanty material, I would invariably bring him on a Thursday morning a rough draft of the dispatch which was to go out on the Saturday, with certain additions or corrections which I would hurriedly make by the light of the dispatches that arrived on Friday, to which ours were supposed to be a reply. He had another peculiar habit, which made his correspondence unimaginably absurd. This was to send back each item of news to its source instead of passing it on. He reported Court news to M. Amelot, news from Paris to M. de Maurepas, from Sweden to M. d'Havrincourt, from Petersburg to M. de La Chetardie; and sometimes he would send each one of them back news which he had received from them, and which I clothed in slightly different language. But as of all the dispatches I brought him to sign he only ran through those to the Court and merely signed those to the other ambassadors unread, I was a little freer to revise these latter in my own way, and I at least interchanged the information in them. But it was impossible for me to give a reasonable turn to the essential dispatches; and I was lucky if he did not decide to interlard them impromptu with a few lines from his own head, which obliged me to go back and hurriedly transcribe the whole document complete with his fresh piece of nonsense which had to receive the honour of the cipher, without which he would not have signed it. Countless times I was tempted, out of regard for his reputation, to cipher something different from what he had said; but I felt that nothing could justify such a breach of faith, and let him rave on at his peril, glad only that I could speak my mind to him, and do my duty by him, both at my own risk.

This I did all the time with an honesty, a zeal, and a courage which deserved a better reward from him than in the end I obtained. It was time for me to be what Heaven had intended me to be when endowing me with a happy nature; what the education I had received from the best of women and that which I had given to myself had made me: and that for once I was. I was thrown on my own resources, without friends, advice, or experience, in a foreign land, and in foreign service, surrounded by a pack of rascals who, for their own interest and through fear of being shown up by a good example, urged me to do as they did. But far from imitating them, I served France well, though I owed her nothing, and served her ambassador better, as was my duty, in so far as things depended on me. By remaining irreproachable in a position fairly exposed to view, I deserved and won the esteem of the Republic and of all the ambassadors with whom we were in correspondence. I also won the affection of all the French residents in Venice, including even the consul, whom I was regretfully supplanting in duties which I knew were rightfully his, and which gave me more embarrassment than pleasure.

Being completely under the control of the Marquis de Mari, who did not trouble about the details of his duties, M. de Montaigu so neglected his that, but for me, the French in Venice would not have been aware that their nation was represented by an ambassador. They became disgusted with him indeed, since he always dismissed them without a hearing when they needed his protection; and none of them appeared any more among his suite or at his table, to which he never invited them. I frequently did the things he should have done on my own responsibility, and rendered such Frenchmen as applied to him or to me every service in my power. In any other country I should have done more; but as I was in too humble a position to see anyone in authority I was often forced to turn to the consul; and he, being established in the country and having his family there, was obliged to observe precautions which prevented his acting as he would have liked. Sometimes, however, when I saw him weakening and afraid to speak, I ventured to take dangerous steps, which often succeeded. One incident I remember, and the memory of it still makes me laugh. It would hardly be suspected that Parisian theatre-goers are indebted to me for Coralline and her sister Camille; but it is indeed a fact. Their father, Veronese, had made a contract for himself and his children with the Italian company. But after receiving two thousand francs for travelling expenses, instead of setting out he had quietly

appeared at the Teatro di San Luca* in Venice, where Coralline, child though she was, was drawing a crowd. The Duc de Gesvres, as lord chamberlain, wrote to the ambassador to claim both father and daughter. M. de Montaigu handed me the letter, but all his instructions were, 'Look into that.' I went to M. Le Blond, and begged him to speak to the patrician who owned the Teatro di San Luca – he was I think one of the Giustiniani – and persuade him to dismiss Veronese, since he was under contract to the King. Le Blond did not much care for the job and did it badly. Giustiniani made some silly excuse, and Veronese was not dismissed. I was annoyed. It was carnival time. I took a domino and a mask, and set out for the Palazzo Giustiniani. Everyone who saw my gondola arrive with the ambassador's livery was impressed; Venice had never witnessed such a thing. I entered and had myself announced as *una signora maschera*.† But once inside I took off my mask and gave my name. The senator turned pale, and stood dumbfounded. 'Sir,' I said to him in the Venetian dialect, 'I am sorry to trouble your Excellency by my visit; but you have at your Teatro di San Luca a man named Veronese, who is under contract to the King. He has been claimed from you, but without success. I have come to ask for him in His Majesty's name.' My short speech was effective. The moment I had gone, my man hurried to give an account of the incident to the State Inquisitors, who gave him a severe dressing-down. Veronese was dismissed that very day, and I sent him a message that if he did not set out within a week I would have him arrested. He set out.

On another occasion I got the captain of a merchant vessel out of trouble by my own almost unaided efforts. He was a Captain Olivet of Marseilles, but I have forgotten the name of his ship. His crew had started a quarrel with some Slavonians in the State service. There had been some violence, and the vessel had been placed under such a strict embargo that no one except the captain himself could board it or leave it without permission. Captain Olivet approached the ambassador, who sent him packing. Then he went to the consul, who told him that as it was not a commercial affair he could not interfere. I put it to M. de Montaigu that he ought to let me make a statement about this affair before the Senate. I do not remember whether he agreed or whether I presented the statement; but I remember very well that as the steps I took led to nothing and the embargo went on I resorted to

* It may have been the Teatro di San Samuele. Proper names entirely escape me.

† A masked lady.]

a course of action which proved successful. I included an account of the affair in a dispatch to M. de Maurepas, and indeed I had trouble enough in getting M. de Montaigu to agree to let the article stand. I knew that though our dispatches were scarcely worth opening they were opened in Venice. I had proof of it in the articles I found word for word in the *Gazette*: a breach of faith against which I had tried in vain to bring the ambassador to complain. My object in mentioning this annoying affair in the dispatch was to play upon their curiosity in such a way as to frighten them and make them give the vessel up. For if we had been compelled to wait for the Court's answer, the captain would have been ruined before it came. But I did more, I visited the ship to question the crew. I took with me Abbé Patizel, chancellor of the consulate, who came very reluctantly, so afraid were all these wretched people of offending the Senate. Being unable to board the vessel on account of the prohibition, I stayed in my gondola, and there drew up my interrogatory, questioning every man in the crew, one after the other, in a very loud voice, and framing my questions in such a way as to elicit answers favourable to their case. I tried to persuade Patizel to ask the questions and draw up the interrogatory himself, which was indeed more in his line than in mine. But he absolutely refused, did not utter a single word, and was scarcely willing to sign the interrogatory after me. However, this rather bold move was successful, and the vessel was released long before a reply came from the ministry. The captain wanted to make me a present. I showed no annoyance, but slapped him on the shoulder and said, 'Captain Olivet, do you think that a man who does not ask Frenchmen for passport fees, which are his established right, is a man who takes payment for affording the King's protection?' He wanted at least to give me a dinner on board, which I accepted, and to which I took Carrio, the secretary of the Spanish embassy, a talented and very charming man, who has since become secretary to the Paris embassy and chargé d'affaires, with whom I had formed an intimacy after the model of our ambassadors.

I should have been happy if whilst doing all the good I could in a spirit of absolute disinterestedness I had been able to introduce sufficient order and accuracy into all these little matters to prevent my being taken in myself and serving others at my own expense. But in such a position as I then filled the slightest of mistakes are not without their consequences. I devoted my whole attention, therefore, to avoiding errors that might have been detrimental to my services.

I was till the last most orderly and most punctilious in every detail of my essential duties. Except for a few mistakes in ciphering caused by unavoidable haste, which M. Amelor's clerks complained of on one occasion, neither the ambassador nor anyone else ever had to reproach me for a single negligence in any of my tasks, which is remarkable in a man as negligent and heedless as I am. But sometimes I was forgetful and careless in the special commissions I undertook; and my sense of justice has always made me take the blame for my own actions before anyone has thought of complaining of me. I will only mention one incident of this sort which is concerned with my departure from Venice, and of which I felt the repercussions later in Paris.

Our cook, whose name was Rousselot, had brought from France an old two-hundred-franc bill which a wig-maker of his acquaintance had received from a Venetian noble called Gianetto Nani as payment for some wigs. Rousselot brought me this bill, and asked me to try and get him something for it by way of compensation. I knew, and he knew too, that it is the custom of Venetian nobles, once they have returned home, to dishonour the debts they have contracted abroad. When some unfortunate creditor tries to force them to pay, they exhaust him with delays and expenses until he loses heart, and in the end gives up entirely or compromises for a negligible sum. I asked M. Le Blond to speak to Gianetto, who acknowledged the bill, but refused to pay. After a struggle he finally promised three *sequins*. But when Le Blond brought him the bill, the three *sequins* were not ready, and he had to wait. During this wait occurred my quarrel with the ambassador and my departure from his service. I left the embassy papers in perfect order, but Rousselot's bill could not be found. M. Le Blond assured me that he had returned it, and I knew his honesty too well to doubt him. But I found it absolutely impossible to remember what had become of that bill. As Gianetto had acknowledged the debt, I asked M. Le Blond to try and get the three *sequins* from him on a receipt, or to induce him to replace the bill by a duplicate. But knowing that it was lost, Gianetto refused to do either. I then offered Rousselot the three *sequins* out of my own purse, in order to discharge the bill. But he refused and told me to arrange the matter with the creditor in Paris, whose address he gave me. Knowing what had happened, the wig-maker demanded his bill or the entire sum. What would I not have given in my indignation, to recover that accursed bill? I paid the two hundred francs, though in a state of great poverty myself. In that way my loss of the bill brought the creditor payment

of the debt in full, whereas if – unluckily for him – it had been found he would have had some difficulty in drawing the ten crowns promised by His Excellency Gianetto Nani.

The talent that I felt I possessed for my work made me enjoy it; and except for the society of my friend Carrio and of the virtuous Altuna, of whom I have soon to speak, except for the perfectly innocent delights of the Piazza di San Marco, of the theatre, and of a few visits which we nearly always paid together, I made my duties my sole pleasure. Although my work was not very hard, especially as I had the assistance of the Abbé de Binis, I nevertheless kept reasonably busy, since the correspondence was very extensive, and it was a time of war. I worked every day for a good part of the morning, and on the post-days sometimes till midnight. The rest of my time I devoted to studying the profession I was entering, in which, after my successful start, I reckoned later to gain more lucrative employment. In fact, opinion about me was unanimous from the ambassador downwards, who was extremely pleased with my services and never made a single complaint. His subsequent rage arose from the fact that when I found my complaints unanswered I demanded my discharge. The ambassadors and ministers of the crown with whom we were in correspondence paid him compliments on the excellence of his secretary, which should have flattered him but which in his perverse mind produced quite the opposite effect. One compliment, in particular, received on an important occasion, he never forgave me. The incident is worth describing.

He was so incapable of self-control that even on a Saturday, the day on which almost all the couriers left, he could not wait for the work to be finished before going out, and continually urged me to hurry with the royal and ministerial dispatches, which he hastily signed before running off somewhere or other, leaving the majority of the letters without his signature. This compelled me, when they merely contained news, to turn them into bulletins; but when they dealt with matters relating to the King's service, it was necessary that someone should sign them, and I did so myself.* This I did in the case of an important dispatch we had just received from the King's chargé d'affaires in Vienna, M. Vincent. It was at the time when Prince Lobkowitz was marching on Naples, and the Count de Gages made his memorable retreat, the finest military achievement of the whole

[* Very seldom, however, for of the letters that survive none bear his signature.]

century, which has received too little attention in Europe. The dispatch stated that a man, whose signature M. Vincent enclosed, was leaving Vienna and was to pass by way of Venice on a secret journey into the Abruzzi for the purpose of promoting a popular uprising on the Austrians' approach. In the absence of the Count de Montaigu, who took no interest in anything, I passed this warning on to the Marquis de l'Hôpital, and so timely was it that it is perhaps thanks to the much abused Jean-Jacques that the Bourbons owe the preservation of the Kingdom of Naples.

In thanking his colleague, as was proper, the Marquis de l'Hôpital mentioned his secretary and the service he had rendered to the common cause. Count de Montaigu, who had reason to reproach himself for negligence in the matter, thought he detected some reproof in this compliment, and spoke rather testily to me on the subject. I had had occasion to be of similar service to the Count de Castellane, the ambassador at Constantinople, though in a less important matter. As there was no other post for Constantinople except the couriers sent by the Senate from time to time to their ambassador, notice of their departure was sent to the Count so that he could communicate with his colleague in Constantinople by this channel if he thought fit. It was usual for this notice to be served a day or two in advance. But so little did they think of M. de Montaigu that they were content to send him a message, merely for form's sake, just an hour or two before the courier left, so that I frequently had to write the dispatch in his absence. M. de Castellane, in his reply, made polite reference to me, as did M. de Jonville at Genoa: two fresh causes for complaint.

I admit that I did not avoid chances of making myself known, but I did not go out of my way to seek them. It seemed quite fair to me that if I gave good services I should look for the normal acknowledgment, which is the esteem of those in a position to judge such services and reward them. I will not say whether my punctilious performance of my duties afforded the ambassador a legitimate cause for complaint; but I certainly know that it is the only complaint he ever made up to the day on which we parted.

He had never introduced any order into his house, and it was full of rabble. The French were badly treated, the Italians took the upper hand; and the best even of them, good men who had given many years of service to the embassy, were rudely dismissed, amongst them the first gentleman, who had held that post under the Count de

Froulay. His name, I think, was Count Peati, or something very similar. The second gentleman, a choice of M. de Montaignu's, was a scoundrel from Mantua by the name of Domenico Vitali, and to him the ambassador entrusted the care of his house. By means of toadying and sordid economies this man obtained his confidence and became his favourite, much to the detriment of the few honest men still left and of the secretary who was the chief of them. No rascal can ever stand up to the straightforward glance of an honest man, and this alone would have been enough to make that man hate me. But his hatred had an additional cause which greatly intensified it. This cause I must state, so that I may be condemned if I was in the wrong.

The ambassador had, according to custom, a box at each of the five theatres, and every day at dinner he announced which of them he intended to visit that evening. I had the next choice, and the gentlemen disposed of the other boxes between them. Then as I went out I took the key of the box for the performance I had chosen. One day, when Vitali was not about, I ordered the servant who waited on me to bring me my key to a house which I named. Instead of giving it to him, however, Vitali said that he had disposed of the box, and I was the more outraged since the servant gave me an account of his reception in public. That evening Vitali tried to offer me some words of apology, which I refused to accept. 'To-morrow, sir,' I replied, 'you will come and apologize to me at such and such an hour in the house where I received the insult, and before the people who witnessed it or, on the day after, come what may, I promise you that either you or I will depart from here.' This resolute tone impressed him. He came to that house at the appointed hour and offered me a public apology in an abject manner that was in keeping with his character. But he laid his plans at his leisure, and whilst continuing to treat me with exaggerated respect he worked so successfully in his Italian fashion that, although he could not persuade the ambassador to dismiss me, he put me into a position in which I was forced to resign.

A wretch like that was certainly incapable of understanding me, but he did so sufficiently to serve his ends. He knew that I was good-natured and excessively patient in putting up with involuntary injustices, but proud and hasty in face of premeditated slights. He knew too that I liked decency and dignity on occasions that required them, and that I was as exacting of the respect due to me as I was careful always to pay others the respect I owed them. He decided to use this

as a means of provoking me, and in this he succeeded. He turned the house upside down, and destroyed all the rules and precedence, the order and regularity that I had tried to maintain. A house without a woman needs a somewhat severe discipline, if decency is to be preserved, and without decency there can be no dignity. He soon turned the place into a house of licence and debauchery, a resort of rakes and rogues. In place of the second gentleman whose dismissal he had procured he introduced another pimp like himself, who ran a public brothel at the sign of the Maltese Cross; and these two rascals, in perfect agreement, behaved with an indecency equal to their insolence. With the solitary exception of the ambassador's room – and even that was not too proper – there was not a single corner of the house fit for any respectable man.

As his Excellency did not take supper, the gentlemen and I had a meal to ourselves in the evenings, which we shared with the Abbé de Binis and the pages. The service would have been cleaner and more decent, the table linen less stained and the food better in the commonest beer-shop. We were given one dirty little tallow candle, pewter plates, and iron forks. I might have stood what went on in private. But they took away my gondola; alone of all the ambassadorial secretaries I was compelled to hire one or go on foot; and now I was attended by his Excellency's servants only when I went to the Senate. Moreover, everything that went on in this house was known in the town. All the ambassador's officials protested loudly, and Domenico, the sole cause of it all, loudest of all, for he knew that the disgusting way in which we were treated affected me more than anyone else. I was the only one in the house who said nothing outside, but I complained loudly to the ambassador, not only of our treatment but of his own conduct. Prompted in secret, however, by his evil genius he daily offered me some new affront. Though compelled to spend freely in order to keep up with my colleagues, and to live up to my position, I could not touch a penny of my salary; and when I asked him for money he spoke to me of his esteem and confidence, as if that could have filled my purse and provided for everything.

These two scoundrels finally succeeded in completely turning their master's head, which was not too strong to start with. They ruined him by continual deals in antiquities in which they always persuaded him he was the sharp fellow, though in fact he was invariably the dupe. They made him rent a palazzo on the Brenta for twice its value, and shared the surplus with the proprietor. Its apartments were encrusted

with mosaics, and embellished with very fine marble columns and pilasters after the fashion of the country. But M. de Montaigu had all this magnificently covered by fine panelling, merely for the reason that panelling is the fashion in Paris. It was for a similar reason that, alone of all the ambassadors resident in Venice, he deprived his pages of their swords and his footmen of their sticks. Such was the man who, perhaps from the same motives, took a dislike to me solely because I gave him faithful service.

I endured his slights, his brutality, and his ill-treatment with patience, for I thought them the product rather of ill-humour than of dislike. But as soon as I saw that he intended to deprive me of the honour I deserved for my good service, I resolved to resign. The first mark of his ill-will which I received was on the occasion of a dinner which he proposed to give to the Duke of Modena and his family, who were in Venice, and at which, so he informed me, I was not to have a place at table. I replied indignantly, though not angrily, that as I had the honour to dine there every day, if the Duke of Modena required that I should not be present on the occasion of his visit, it was a point of honour for his Excellency and a necessity for me that his request should be refused. 'What!' he exclaimed in a rage. 'My secretary, who is not even a gentleman, claims to dine with a sovereign, when my gentlemen do not!' 'Yes, sir,' I replied, 'the post with which your Excellency has honoured me confers such nobility on me for so long as I hold it that I take precedence even of your gentlemen, or those who call themselves such, and am admitted where they cannot go. You are not unaware that on the day when you make your public entry I am required by etiquette and immemorial custom to follow you in ceremonial uniform, and that I then have the honour of dining with you in the Palazzo di San Marco. I do not see why a man who has the right to eat in public with the Doge and the Venetian senate may not eat in private with the Duke of Modena.' Although this argument was unanswerable, the ambassador did not give in. But we had no occasion to renew the dispute, for the Duke of Modena did not come to dinner.

From that time he never ceased to slight me, to treat me unjustly and deliberately to deprive me of the small privileges belonging to my post, privileges which he transferred to his dear Vitali; and I am sure that if he had dared to send him to the Senate in my place he would have done so. He generally employed the Abbé de Binis to write his private letters in his study; and he made use of him to write

M. de Maurepas an account of the Captain Olivet affair, in which, far from making any mention of me who had concerned myself in it alone, he even deprived me of the credit for the interrogatory of which he sent a copy and which he attributed to Patizel, who had not uttered a word. He wanted to annoy me and please his favourite, but not to get rid of me. He knew that it would not be as easy to find a successor to me as it had been in the case of M. Follau, who had already told the world something about him. He absolutely required a secretary who knew Italian to deal with the answers from the Senate, someone who would write all his dispatches and manage all his affairs without his having to bother about anything, someone with sufficient merit to serve him faithfully and at the same time mean enough to toady to his rascally gentlemen. He wanted therefore to retain me and to humble me by keeping me far from my country and his, and without sufficient money to return; and he would perhaps have succeeded if he had set about it with more moderation. But Vitali, who had other views and wanted to force me into action, got his way. Once I saw that I was wasting my efforts; that the ambassador was treating my services as crimes instead of being grateful for them; that all I could expect from him was insults at home and injustice abroad, and that, considering the general discredit he had brought upon himself, his malice might prejudice me while his favours could not serve me, I made up my mind and asked leave to resign, giving him sufficient time, however, to find a new secretary. Without saying yes or no, he continued his usual behaviour. Seeing that things were going no better and that he was not trying to find my successor, I wrote to his brother and, after setting out my reasons, asked him to obtain my release from his Excellency, adding that whether I got it or not it was impossible for me to stay. I waited for a long time without receiving a reply and began to be seriously embarrassed. But finally the ambassador received a letter from his brother. It must have been very sharp in tone for, although he was subject to very violent fits of temper, I had never seen him in such a state before. After a torrent of horrible abuse, unable to think what more to say, he accused me of having sold his cipher. I burst out laughing, and mockingly asked him whether he thought there was any man in all Venice stupid enough to give a crown for it. This reply made him foam with rage. He made a show of calling his servants to throw me out of the window, as he said. Up to that moment I had been very calm, but when I was threatened anger and indignation ran away with me too.

I rushed to the door, and drew the catch that secured it on the inside. 'No, Count,' I said, standing solemnly up to him, 'your people shall not interfere in this affair. It shall be settled between us two, if you please.' My action and my look instantly calmed him; his whole attitude revealed surprise and alarm. When I saw that he had recovered from his fury I took my leave of him in very few words. Then without waiting for his reply I opened the door, went out, and walked calmly across the ante-room past all his servants, who rose in the usual way, and who I think would rather have taken my part against him than his against me. I did not go up to my room, but immediately descended the stairs and left the palazzo, never to return.

I went straight to M. Le Blond, to tell him what had happened. He was not greatly surprised, for he knew the man. He kept me to dinner, and the dinner, though impromptu, was splendid. Every Frenchman of consequence in all Venice was there; there was not a soul at the ambassador's. The consul told my tale to the company; and when he had done all exclaimed with one voice, which was not in His Excellency's favour. He had not settled my account, he had not given me a *sou* and, reduced to the few *louis* I had on me for my sole resource, I was in difficulties about my return journey. All purses were opened to me. I borrowed twenty *sequins* from M. Le Blond, and an equal sum from M. de Saint-Cyr, with whom next after him I was on the closest terms. I thanked all the rest, and until I left stayed with the chancellor of the consulate in order to prove to the public that the French nation was no accomplice in her ambassador's crimes. Furious at seeing me fêted in my misfortune, and himself, ambassador though he was, neglected, M. de Montaignu completely lost his head and behaved like a madman. He so far forgot himself indeed as to present a written request to the Senate for my arrest. The Abbé de Binis warned me of this, and I decided to stay another fortnight instead of leaving two days later as I had intended. My conduct had been witnessed and approved; I was universally respected. The Senate did not even condescend to reply to his extraordinary request, and sent me a message by the consul that I could stay in Venice as long as I liked, and need not trouble myself about the actions of a madman. I continued to see my friends, and went to take leave of the Spanish ambassador, who received me very kindly, and of the Count Finochietti, the Neapolitan minister, whom I did not find at home. But I wrote to him, and he sent me the most courteous possible reply. Finally I departed, leaving behind me, despite my difficulties, no debts

other than the loans I have just mentioned and about fifty crowns owed to a merchant called Morandi, which Carrio undertook to settle for me, and for which I have never repaid him, although we have often met since then. As for those two loans, I paid them off punctually as soon as I was able.

Let us not leave Venice without a word about the famous amusements of that city, or at least about the very small part I took in them during my stay. It is clear from the course of my youth how little I pursued the pleasures of that age, or at least those which are called such. I did not change my tastes in Venice; but my duties, which would anyhow have prevented that, gave the simple pleasures I allowed myself a greater relish. The first and most charming of these was the company of men of distinction, M. Le Blond, M. de Saint-Cyr, Carrio, Altuna, and a charming Friulian gentleman whose name, I am sorry to say, escapes me, but whom I never remember without emotion; of all the men I have met in my life, he was the one whose heart was most like my own. We were intimate also with two or three Englishmen, who were witty and well educated and as passionately fond of music as ourselves. All these gentlemen had their wives, or women friends, or mistresses; and these latter were nearly all women of parts at whose houses there was singing and dancing. There was some gambling too, but very little; our lively tastes, our talents, and the theatre made this seem a poor amusement. Gambling is the resource only of the bored. I had brought from Paris the national prejudice against Italian music; but I had also received from Nature that acute sensibility against which prejudices are powerless. I soon contracted the passion which it inspires in all those born to understand it. When I listened to the barcarolles I decided that I had never heard singing till then; and soon I was so crazy for the opera that I grew tired of always chattering, eating, and playing in the boxes when all I wanted was to listen, and often stole away from company to some other part of the theatre, where I would shut myself alone in my own box and, despite the length of the performance, give myself up to the pleasure of enjoying it, undisturbed, to the very end. One day, at the Teatro di San Crisostomo, I fell asleep, and far more soundly than if I had been in bed. The loud and brilliant arias did not wake me. But who could describe the delicious sensation produced in me by the delicate harmony and angelic singing of that song which finally did! What an awakening, what bliss, what ecstasy when I opened my ears and my eyes together! My first thought was that

I was in paradise. This ravishing piece, which I still remember and shall never forget so long as I live, began like this:

Conservami la bella
Che si m' accende il cor.*

I decided to get the music, and did so. I kept it for a long time, but on paper it was not the same as in my memory. The notes were the same, but it was not the same thing. That divine aria can be performed nowhere but in my head, as indeed it was on the day when it awoke me.

One kind of music, in my opinion greatly superior to the operatic, is that of the *scuole*. The *scuole* are charitable institutions founded for the education of young women without means, who subsequently receive dowries from the State either at marriage or for the cloister. Amongst the talents cultivated in these young girls music holds pride of place. Every Sunday, in the church of each of these four *scuole*, motets are sung during vespers, for full choir and orchestra, composed and conducted by the greatest masters in Italy and sung in the grilled galleries by these girls, the oldest of whom is under twenty. I cannot conceive of anything so pleasurable or so moving as that music: the artistic riches, the exquisite taste of the singing, the beauty of the voices, the delicacy of execution, everything about those delightful concerts combines to produce an impression which is certainly not a fashionable one, but against which I doubt whether any man's heart is proof. Never did Carrio or I miss those vespers in the Mendicanti, and we were not the only ones. The church was always full of music-lovers; even singers from the opera came here to have a real lesson in tasteful singing from these excellent models. What distressed me were the accursed grilles, which only let the sound through but concealed those angels of beauty – for the singing was worthy of angels – from my sight. I could talk of nothing else. One day when I spoke of them at M. Le Blond's, he replied: 'If you are so curious to see these young girls, it is quite easy to satisfy you. I am one of the directors of the institution, and I will take you to tea with them.' I gave him no peace until he kept his word. As we entered the room where sat these beauties I had so desired, I felt such an amorous trembling as I had never known. M. Le Blond introduced me to one of these famous singers after another, whose names and voices were all I knew of

* My lovely one will save me
For, see, my heart's on fire.

them. 'Come, Sophie' . . . She was hideous. 'Come, Cattina' . . . She had only one eye. 'Come, Bettina' . . . She was disfigured by small-pox. Scarcely one of them was without some notable defect. My tormentor laughed at my cruel surprise. Two or three, however, seemed passable to me; *they* only sang in the chorus. I was in despair. We teased them at tea, and they became quite lively. Plainness does not preclude the graces, and these I found they possessed. 'No one can sing like that without a soul,' I said to myself. 'They have souls.' In the end my way of looking at them so changed that when I left I was almost in love with every one of those plain creatures. I hardly dared attend their vespers again, but I had reason to feel that the worst was over. I continued to find their singing delightful, and their voices lent such imaginary charm to their faces that so long as they were singing I persisted in finding them beautiful, notwithstanding the evidence of my eyes.

Music in Italy costs so little that there is no reason for anyone with a taste for it to go without. I hired a clavichord, and for half a crown I had four or five performers in my room, with whom I practised once a week the pieces that had pleased me best at the Opera. I also made them try over some orchestral parts of my 'Gallant Muses'. Either because they pleased him, or out of a desire to flatter me, the ballet master of San Crisostomo asked me for two of them, which I had the pleasure of hearing played by that admirable orchestra, and which were danced by a pretty, charming little girl called Bettina, who was kept by one of our friends, a Spaniard called Fagoaga, and at whose house we quite often spent the evening.

But, speaking of women, Venice is not the sort of town in which a man abstains from them. Have you no confession to make under this head, someone may ask. Yes, I have something to tell, certainly, and I will proceed to this confession with the same frankness as I have shown all along.

I have always had a disgust for prostitutes, and at Venice I had no other women within my reach, the majority of houses in the city being closed to me on account of my position. M. Le Blond's daughters were very charming, but difficult to approach; and I had too much respect for their father and mother even to think of desiring them.

I should have felt more attracted to a young person named Mlle de Catineo, the daughter of the King of Prussia's agent; but Carrio was in love with her – there was even some talk of marriage. He was well-off

and I had nothing; he had a salary of a hundred *louis*, and I had only as many *pistoles*; and not only did I not want to enter into competition with a friend, but I knew that nowhere, and certainly not in Venice, can one start playing the gallant with a purse as empty as that. I had not given up my pernicious habit of satisfying my needs in another way, and I was too busy seriously to feel the temptations of the climate. So I lived for more than a year as chastely as I had in Paris, and I departed after eighteen months having only approached the opposite sex on two occasions, as a result of special opportunities which I will mention.

The first was provided for me by that honest gentleman Vitali, some time after the formal apology which I had been obliged to demand of him. There was some talk at table about the amusements of Venice, during which the gentlemen reproached me for my indifference to the most delectable of all, and after praising the graceful manners of Venetian courtesans declared that they had no equals in the world. Domenico then said that I must meet the most charming of them all, offered to introduce me to her, and swore that she would please me. I burst out laughing at this obliging proposal; and Count Peati, an elderly and venerable man, remarked with more frankness than one would have expected from an Italian, that he thought me too sensible to let myself be taken to visit women by an enemy. I had indeed neither the intention nor the desire. Nevertheless, through one of those inconsistencies that I find it difficult myself to understand, I finally let them drag me off, against my inclinations, my feelings, my reason, and my will as well, out of sheer weakness, being ashamed to show my distrust for them and, as they say in that country, *per non parer troppo coglione*.^{*} The *padoana* to whose house we went was very good-looking, even beautiful, but her beauty was not of the kind that pleased me. Domenico left me with her. I sent for *sorbetti*, asked her to sing, and at the end of half an hour put a ducat on the table and prepared to go. But she was so strangely scrupulous that she would not accept money that she had not earned, and I so strangely stupid as to give in to her scruple. I returned to the palace so certain that I had caught the pox that the first thing I did on my return was to send for the surgeon and ask for some medicines. Nothing can equal the uneasiness I felt for a whole three weeks, without any real discomfort or any obvious symptom to justify it. I could not imagine that anyone could leave the embraces of a *padoana* unscathed. The surgeon himself had

^{*} So as not to appear too much of a fool.

the greatest imaginable trouble in reassuring me. He only succeeded, in the end, by persuading me that I was so peculiarly made that I could not easily catch an infection; and though I have perhaps exposed myself less to that danger than any other man, the fact that I have never experienced an attack of that nature is a proof to me that the surgeon was right. This belief, however, has never made me rash; and if I have indeed received this advantage from Nature, I can say that I have never abused it.

My other adventure, although with a woman also, was of a very different kind, both in its origin and its consequences. I have mentioned that Captain Olivet gave me a dinner on board, and that I took the Spanish secretary with me. I expected a salute of cannon. The crew received us drawn up in line, but not a spot of powder was burnt, which greatly vexed me on account of Carrio who, I could see, was rather hurt. Certainly merchant vessels are in the habit of giving a salute of cannon to people of considerably less importance than ourselves. Besides, I felt that I had earned some mark of consideration from the captain. I could not disguise my feelings, for I always find that impossible; and although the dinner was very good and Olivet did the honours most admirably, I sat down in a bad humour, ate little, and spoke even less.

At the first toast I expected a volley at least. Nothing. Carrio, who could read my mind, laughed to see me sulking like a child. A third of the way through dinner I saw a gondola approaching. 'Good lord, sir,' said the captain. 'Look out for yourself. Here is the enemy.' I asked him what he meant, and he replied with a joke. The gondola lay-to, and I saw a dazzling young person step out, very coquettishly dressed, and extremely skittish. In three bounds she was in the state-room and before I had noticed a place being laid for her I found her sitting beside me. She was as charming as she was lively, a brunette of twenty at the most. She only spoke Italian, and her accent alone would have been enough to turn my head. As she ate and chattered, she looked at me, stared a moment, and exclaimed: 'Holy Virgin! Oh, my dear Brémond, what an age since I have seen you!' Whereat she threw herself into my arms, put her lips to mine, and squeezed me till I almost stifled. Her large, black, Oriental eyes darted fiery sparks into my heart; and though my surprise rather set me back at first, passion so quickly overcame me that, in spite of the spectators, the lady herself had to restrain me. For I was intoxicated or, rather, delirious. When she saw me as excited as she wished she grew more

moderate in her caresses, but no less skittish, and then she vouchsafed to explain the true, or pretended, reason for all this forwardness. She told us that I was the living image of M. de Brémont, the Director of Customs for Tuscany, that she had been madly in love with that gentleman, and was so still; that she had left him because she was a fool; that she would take me in his place; that she intended to love me because she had a fancy to; that, for the same reason, I must love her for so long as she had a fancy; and that when she left me I must bear it as patiently as her dear Brémont had done. No sooner said than done. She took possession of me as if I were hers, giving me her gloves, her fan, her *cinda*,* and her head-dress to hold. She ordered me about, to do this and that, and I obeyed. She told me to go and send back her gondola because she wished to use mine, and I went. She told me to leave my place and to ask Carrio to take it, because she had something to say to him, and I did so. They talked together for a long time in whispers, and I made no objection. When she called me I came back. 'Listen, Gianetto,' she said to me. 'I do not want to be loved in the French fashion. Indeed, it would be of no use. The moment you are bored, go. But do not stop half-way, I warn you.' After dinner we went to see the glass works at Murano. She bought a lot of little trinkets, and made no ceremony about leaving us to pay for them. But everywhere the tips she left were much larger than our actual spendings. From the carelessness with which she threw her money about, and made us throw ours, it was plain that it had no value for her. When she asked for payment I think that it was more out of vanity than greed; she felt her self-respect increased by the price men put on her favours. In the evening we took her back to her rooms. While we talked I saw two pistols on her dressing-table. 'Ah,' I said, picking one up, 'here is a vanity box of a new manufacture. May I ask what it is used for? For I know that you have other arms which fire better than these.' After a few light remarks in the same tone, she told us with a naïve pride which made her still more charming: 'When I confer favours on men I do not love, I make them pay for the boredom they cause me. Nothing could be fairer. For though I endure their caresses I do not care to endure their insults, and I shall not miss the first man who treats me with disrespect.'

As I left, I made an appointment for the next day. I did not keep her waiting. I found her *in vestito di confidenza*, in a more than seductive undress, which is unknown except in southern lands and which

[* Her girdle, or possibly her bouquet.]

I will not amuse myself by describing, although I remember it only too well. I will merely say that her ruffles and bodice were edged with silk thread ornamented with rose-coloured tufts, and this seemed to me to enhance the beauty of her very fine skin. I saw afterwards that it was the fashion in Venice; and its effect is so charming that I am surprised this fashion has never spread to France. I had no idea of the sensual pleasures in store for me. I have spoken of Mme de Larnage with the rapture that her memory still sometimes arouses in me. But how old and plain and cold she was compared to my Giulietta. Do not attempt to imagine the charms and graces of that enchanting girl. You would not come near to the truth. Young virgins in the cloisters are not more fresh, seraglio beauties are not so sportive, the houris of paradise are less enticing. Never was such sweet pleasure offered to mortal heart and senses. Alas, had I only known how to enjoy it fully and completely for a single second! I savoured it, but without enchantment. I dulled all its delights. I killed them as if on purpose. No, Nature has not made me for sensual delight. She has put the hunger for it in my heart, but what might be ineffable pleasure turns to poison in my wretched head.

If there is one incident in my life which plainly reveals my character, it is the one I am now going to describe. By forcibly reminding myself at this moment of the purpose of my book, I shall have strength to despise the false modesty which might prevent my fulfilling it. Whoever you may be that wish to know a man, have the courage to read the next two or three pages and you will have complete knowledge of Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

I entered a courtesan's room as if it were the sanctuary of love and beauty; in her person I felt I saw the divinity. I could never have believed it possible to feel anything like the emotion she inspired in me, without my also feeling a respect and esteem for her. No sooner did I recognize from our first familiarities the value of her charms and caresses than, fearing to lose the fruit prematurely, I tried to make haste and pluck it. Suddenly, instead of the fire that devoured me, I felt a deathly cold flow through my veins; my legs trembled; I sat down on the point of fainting, and wept like a child.

Who could guess the cause of my tears, or the thoughts that went through my head at that moment? 'This thing which is at my disposal', I said to myself, 'is Nature's masterpiece and love's. Its mind, its body, every part is perfect. She is not only charming and beautiful, but good also and generous. Great men and princes should be her

slaves. Sceptres should lie at her feet. Yet here she is, a wretched street-walker, on sale to the world. The captain of a merchant ship can dispose of her. She comes and throws herself at my head, at mine although she knows I am a nobody, although my merits, which she cannot know, would be nothing in her eyes. There is something incomprehensible about this. Either my heart deceives me, deludes my senses and makes me the dupe of a worthless slut, or some secret flaw that I do not see destroys the value of her charms and makes her repulsive to those who should be quarrelling for possession of her. I began to seek for that flaw with a singular persistence, and it did not so much as occur to me that the pox might have something to do with it. The freshness of her flesh, the brightness of her colouring, the whiteness of her teeth, the sweetness of her breath, the air of cleanliness that pervaded her person, so completely banished that idea from my mind that, being still in doubt about my own health since my visit to the *padoana*, I even felt some qualms about my not being wholesome enough for her, and I am quite convinced that I was not deceived in my confidence.

These well-timed reflections moved me to the point of tears, and Giulietta, for whom this sight was certainly an unusual one in such a situation, was momentarily at a loss. But after walking round the room and passing in front of her glass, she understood – and my eyes confirmed her reason – that repulsion had nothing to do with my freakish behaviour. It was not difficult for her to dispel my melancholy and rid me of my slight sense of shame. But just as I was about to sink upon a breast which seemed about to suffer a man's lips and hand for the first time, I perceived that she had a malformed nipple. I beat my brow, looked harder, and made certain that this nipple did not match the other. Then I started wondering about the reason for this malformation. I was struck by the thought that it resulted from some remarkable imperfection of Nature and, after turning this idea over in my head, I saw as clear as daylight that instead of the most charming creature I could possibly imagine I held in my arms some kind of monster, rejected by Nature, men, and love. I carried my stupidity so far as to speak to her about her malformed nipple. First she took the matter as a joke and said and did things in her skittish humour that were enough to make me die of love. But as I still felt some remnant of uneasiness, which I could not conceal from her, I finally saw her blush, adjust her clothes, and take her place at the window, without a word. I tried to sit down beside her. She moved and sat down on a

couch, then got up next moment and walked about the room, fanning herself. Finally she said to me in a cold and scornful voice: 'Gianetto, lascia le donne, e studia la matematica.'*

Before leaving, I asked her for another appointment next day, which she put off till the third day, adding with an ironical smile that I must need a rest. I spent the time rather uneasily, with my heart full of her charms and graces, conscious of my strange behaviour and regretting the ill-use I had made of those moments which it had only rested with me to transform into the sweetest in my life. I waited with the liveliest impatience for the moment when I could make good my loss. Nevertheless I could not help uneasily wondering how I could reconcile the perfections of this adorable girl with the unworthiness of her trade. I ran, I flew to her at the hour appointed. I do not know whether her passionate temperament would have been better satisfied by this visit. At least her pride would have been flattered. I looked forward to the delicious pleasure of showing her the manifold ways in which I could repair my mistakes. She spared me the ordeal. The gondolier, whom I had sent to her rooms on landing, brought me the news that she had left on the previous evening for Florence. If I had not felt whole-hearted love when she was in my arms, I felt it most cruelly when I lost her. My insane regret has never left me. Pleasant and charming though she was in my eyes, I could console myself for her loss. But what I have never been able to console myself for is, I confess, that she only carried away a scornful memory of me.

There are my two stories. The eighteen months which† I spent in Venice have left me nothing else to relate but a simple project at the most. Carrio, who was a lady's man, grew weary of always going to women who belonged to others and took it into his head to have one of his own; and as we were inseparable he suggested to me an arrangement which is not rare in Venice, that we should keep one between us. I agreed. The next question was to find a safe one. He made such thorough investigations that he unearthed a little girl of eleven or twelve, whom her wretched mother wanted to sell. We went to see her together. My pity was stirred at the sight of this child. She was fair and as gentle as a lamb. One would never have supposed she was an Italian. Living is very cheap in Venice. We gave the mother some money, and made arrangements for the daughter's keep. She had a

* Give up the ladies, and study mathematics.

[† Actually a year only.]

fine voice and, to provide her with a means of livelihood, we gave her a spinet and paid for a singing master. All this cost us barely two *sequins* a month each, and saved us more in other expenses, but as we had to wait till she was mature, we had to sow a great deal before we could reap. However we were content to go and spend our evenings there and chatter and play most innocently with the child, and perhaps we got more agreeable amusement than if we had possessed her; so true is it that what really attaches us to a woman is not so much sensual enjoyment as a certain pleasure in living beside her. Insensibly my heart grew fond of little Anzoletta, but with a paternal affection in which my senses played so little part that as it increased the possibility of sensuality entering into my feelings for her steadily diminished – I felt that I should be as horrified at approaching this child, once she was old enough, as at committing the crime of incest. I saw the good Carrio's feelings, unknown to himself, taking the same form. We were procuring for ourselves, unthinkingly, pleasures no less charming but quite different from those we had first contemplated; and I am certain that, however beautiful that poor child might have become, far from being the corrupters of her innocence we should have been its guardians. My disaster, which came shortly afterwards, did not leave me time to play a part in this good work, and I can only take credit in this matter for the inclinations of my heart. Let us return to my journey.

My first plan on leaving M. de Montaignu was to retire to Geneva, and wait there till a happier fate should remove the obstacles and permit me to rejoin my poor Mamma. But the stir caused by our quarrel and his stupidity in writing about it to the Court made me decide to go to Paris myself, to give an account of my own conduct, and complain of that madman's behaviour. From Venice I communicated this decision to M. Du Theil, who was temporarily in charge of foreign affairs after M. Amelot's death. I left at the same time as my letter, and took the road through Bergamo, Como, and Domodossola, crossing the Simplon. At Sion, M. de Chaignon, the French chargé d'affaires, showed me great kindness, and at Geneva M. de La Closure did the same. I renewed acquaintance with M. de Gauffecourt, from whom I had some money to receive. I had passed through Nyon without seeing my father, not that it did not cost me some pangs, but I could not make up my mind to show myself to my stepmother after my disaster, for I was certain that she would condemn me unheard. Duvillard, the bookseller, an old friend of my father's, reproached me

severely for this wickedness. I explained the reason to him and, to repair it without running the risk of seeing my stepmother, I hired a carriage in which we went to Nyon together and put up at the inn. Duvillard went to find my poor father, who came running to embrace me. We supped together, and after spending an evening which warmed my heart I returned to Geneva next morning with Duvillard, to whom I have always felt grateful for the kindness he did me on that occasion.

My shortest way was not through Lyons. But I wanted to pass through that city in order to look into a very low trick of M. de Montaigu's. I had sent to Paris for a little case containing a gold-embroidered waistcoat, some pairs of ruffles, and six pairs of white silk stockings: that was all. At his own suggestion I put this little case, or rather this box, with his baggage. On the apothecary's bill which he insisted on giving me in payment of my salary, and which he had written with his own hand, he had stated that this box, which he called a bale, weighed eleven hundredweight, and he had charged me carriage on it at an enormous rate. Thanks to M. Boy de La Tour, to whom I was introduced by his uncle M. Roguin, it was verified from the customs registers at Lyons and Marseilles that the said bundle weighed no more than forty-five pounds, and that the carriage had been charged at this weight. I attached this authorized extract to M. de Montaigu's bill and, armed with these documents and several others equally damning, I went to Paris, most impatient to make use of them. In all my long journey I had some little adventures, at Como, in the Valais, and elsewhere. I saw several sights, among others the Borromean Islands, which deserve description; but time presses. I am surrounded by spies and forced to perform hastily and badly a task which requires the leisure and tranquillity which I lack. If ever Providence casts eyes upon me, and at last grants me a less disturbed life, I will devote my days to recasting this work, if I can, or at least to adding a supplement, which I feel it greatly needs.*

The report of my story had preceded me, and when I arrived I found that everyone in public offices and in society was scandalized at the ambassador's mad behaviour. Nevertheless, despite the public outcry in Venice and the irrefutable proofs that I produced, I could not obtain justice. In fact, far from getting satisfaction or reparation, I was left at the ambassador's mercy for my salary, and this for the sole reason that, not being a Frenchman, I had no right to French protec-

* I have given up this idea.

tion, and the matter was therefore a private one between myself and him. Everyone agreed with me that I had been insulted and injured, and was most unfortunate; that the ambassador was crazy, cruel, and iniquitous, and that the whole affair would disgrace him for ever. But then he was the ambassador, and I was only the secretary. The laws of society, or what was so called, decreed that I should obtain no justice, and I obtained none. I imagined that if I complained and treated the fool publicly as he deserved I should finally be told to be quiet; and that was what I was waiting for, since I was firmly resolved not to obey until I had obtained a decision. But at that time there was no Minister of Foreign Affairs. They let me protest; they encouraged me, and joined in the chorus. But things remained in that state until I finally grew tired of always being right but never getting justice, became disheartened, and let the matter drop.

The only person who received me coldly was the one from whom I should least have expected such an injustice, Mme de Beuzenval. With her head full of prerogatives of rank and nobility, she could never imagine that an ambassador might be wrong and his secretary right. The reception she gave me was coloured by this prejudice; and I was so hurt that after leaving her house I wrote her one of the strongest and sharpest letters I can ever have written. I never went there again. Father Castel gave me a better welcome, but through his Jesuit smoothness I could see him very faithfully following one of the great maxims of the Society, that of always sacrificing the weaker to the stronger. My firm belief in the justice of my cause, and my national pride did not allow me to endure this partiality with patience. I gave up my visits to Father Castel, and consequently to the Jesuits, for I knew no one else there. Besides, the tyrannical and intriguing spirit of his colleagues, which was a great contrast to Father Hemet's cordiality, gave me such a distaste for their company that I have never met one of them since that time, except for Father Berthier, whom I met two or three times at the Dupins' house, where he was working extremely hard with that gentleman on a refutation of Montesquieu.

Let us conclude, once and for all, what remains for me to say about M. de Montaigu. I had told him during our dispute that what he needed was not a secretary but a lawyer's clerk. He followed my advice and, indeed, engaged as my successor an actual lawyer who in under a year robbed him of twenty or thirty thousand *livres*. He dismissed him and had him imprisoned; he dismissed his gentlemen in disgrace, which provoked a scandal; he had all manner of quarrels,

received insults that a valet would not have stomached, and at last, after a succession of follies, got himself recalled, and retired to his cabbages. Among the reprimands that he received from Court, his quarrel with me was apparently not forgotten. Shortly after his return, at any rate, he sent his steward to settle my account and give me some money. I was extremely short of it at the time; my Venetian debts – debts of honour if ever there were any – weighed on my spirits. I seized the chance that offered itself of discharging them, as well as Gianetto Nani's bill, and accepted what he offered. I paid all my debts, and was left without a penny, as before, but relieved of a burden which had been unbearable. After that time I did not hear any other mention of M. de Montaignu until his death, of which I learnt from the newspaper. May God grant the poor man peace! He was as fitted to be an ambassador as I, in my youth, had been to be an attorney. Nevertheless, it had been in his power to acquit himself honourably with the aid of my services, and to ensure my rapid advancement in the profession for which Count de Gouvion had intended me in my youth, and in which I had in later life, by my own unaided efforts, made myself capable of taking a position.

The justice and fruitlessness of my complaints left a seed of indignation in my heart against our absurd civil institutions, whereby the real welfare of the public and true justice are always sacrificed to some kind of apparent order, which is in reality detrimental to all order, and which merely gives the sanction of public authority to the oppression of the weak and the iniquity of the strong. Two things prevented that seed from developing at that time, as it afterwards did; the first, that the affair was purely personal to myself, and since private interest never gives rise to great or noble actions, it was incapable of rousing my heart to those divine flights which can only come out of the purest love of justice and beauty; and the second was the charm of friendship, which brought a gentler feeling into the ascendant, thereby moderating and calming my rage. At Venice I had made the acquaintance of a Basque, a friend of my friend Carrio's, and worthy to be a friend of any good man. This pleasant young man, who had been born to possess every talent and virtue, had just made the Italian tour, to cultivate his taste in the arts, and now, imagining that he had no more to learn, he intended to return directly to his country. I told him that the arts were only a recreation for a genius like his, which was made to cultivate the sciences; and I advised him, in order to acquire a taste for them, to go to Paris and spend six months there. He accepted

my advice, went to Paris, and was awaiting me there when I arrived. His lodgings were too big for him, and he offered me a half of them, which I accepted. I found him all aglow for the sciences. Nothing was beyond his grasp; he devoured and digested everything at prodigious speed. How he thanked me for having procured him this nourishment for his intellect, which had been tormented by the desire for learning without his ever suspecting it! What treasures of knowledge and virtue I found in that powerful mind! I felt that he was the friend I needed, and we became intimate. Our tastes differed, and we argued perpetually. Both being obstinate, we never agreed about anything. All the same, we could not separate; and although we crossed one another continually, neither would have wished the other to be different.

Ignacio Emanuel de Altuna was one of those rare men that only Spain produces, and of whom she produces too few for her glory. He was without those violent Spanish passions common in his countrymen; the idea of vengeance could no more have entered his mind than the desire for it could have arisen in his heart. He was too proud to be vindictive, and I have often heard him say in absolute coolness that no mortal could offend him. He was gallant, but without sentiment. He played with women as if they were pretty children. He liked the company of his friends' mistresses; but I never knew him to have one of his own, or to show any desire of having one. The fire of virtue which devoured his heart never allowed the flames of desire to arise there.

After his travels he married and died young, leaving some children behind him, and I am as certain as I am of my own existence that his wife was the first and only woman with whom he enjoyed the pleasures of love. Outwardly he was devout in the Spanish fashion, but in his heart he was of an angelic piety. Except for myself, he is the only tolerant man I have known in all my life. He never inquired after anyone's religious opinions. It scarcely mattered to him whether his friend was a Jew, a Protestant, a Turk, a bigot, or an atheist, provided he was an honest man. Stubborn and headstrong over matters of small importance, once religion or even morality came into the question he drew back, kept quiet, or simply said: 'I am only responsible for myself.' It is incredible that so exalted a mind could also show such exaggeratedly minute attention to detail. He apportioned his day in advance by the hour, the quarter, and the minute, dividing it amongst his various pursuits, and kept so scrupulously to his plan

that if the hour struck while he was reading a sentence he shut his book without finishing it. Of these periods of time, thus laid out, some were devoted to one study, some to another; and there were some for reflection, conversation, and divine service, for Locke, for telling his beads, for visits, for music, and for painting. No pleasure or temptation or consideration was allowed to upset his arrangements; only a duty to be fulfilled might do so. As he gave me the list of his periods, so that I should conform to them, I began by laughing; but I ended with tears of admiration. He never disturbed anyone, nor allowed himself to be disturbed; and he was abrupt with people whose courtesies he found a nuisance. He was hot-tempered, but not sulky. I have often seen him in a rage, but never irritated. He had the gayest possible disposition; he could take a joke and loved making one; indeed he shone in this respect, and had a talent for epigrams. When provoked, he was noisy and loud-voiced, and his words carried. But while he was shouting one could see him smile; and in the midst of his excitement some humorous phrase would occur to him, which would set everyone laughing. He was not phlegmatic like a Spaniard, nor had he a Spanish complexion. His skin was fair, his cheeks red, and his hair a light chestnut. He was big and well-made, with a body that was a fit habitation for his mind.

This wise heart and wise head was a good judge of men, and became my friend; and that is sufficient answer for those who are not. We became so intimate that we planned to spend our lives together. I was to go to Ascoytia, after some years, and live with him on his estate. All the details of this scheme were arranged between us on the evening before his departure. All that was lacking was that element which, even in the best concerted plans, does not depend upon man. Subsequent events, my misfortunes, his marriage, and his eventual death have parted us for ever. One might suppose that only the dark schemes of wicked men succeed; the innocent plans of the good hardly ever find fulfilment.

Having experienced the drawbacks of dependence, I firmly resolved not to expose myself to them again. Having seen the ambitious plans which circumstances had led me to form upset almost at their birth, and discouraged from re-entering a profession in which I had begun so well but from which nevertheless I had just been thrown out, I resolved never again to attach myself to anyone, but to maintain my independence by making use of my talents, the extent of which I was just beginning to feel; for hitherto I had held too modest an

opinion of them. I began to work again on my opera, which I had discontinued in order to go to Venice; and in order to devote myself to it in greater quiet, after Altuna's departure I returned to my old lodgings in the Hôtel Saint-Quentin, which, being in an unfrequented quarter not far from the Luxembourg, was more conducive to peaceful work than the noisy Rue Saint-Honoré. There the only true consolation that Heaven allowed me to taste in my misery, the only one that makes my life bearable, awaited me. This was no passing acquaintance, and so I must speak in some detail of the manner in which it was made.

We had a new landlady who came from Orléans and, to look after the linen, she had taken a girl from her own town, of about twenty-two or twenty-three, who ate with us, as did our hostess. This girl, Thérèse Le Vasseur by name, was of a decent family. Her father had been employed at the Orléans mint, and her mother in business. They had a great number of children. But when the Orléans mint was closed her father was in the street, while her mother, having gone through bankruptcy, failed in her business, gave it up, and came to Paris with her husband and daughter, who kept all three of them on her wages.

The first time that I saw this girl appear at table I was struck by her modest behaviour and, even more, by her bright and gentle looks, of which I had never seen the like before. The company at table, besides M. de Bonnefond, was made up of several Irish priests, Gascons, and others of that quality. Our landlady herself had led a rackety life; and I was the only person there who spoke and behaved decently. They teased the girl, I sprang to her defence, and then the jokes were turned against me. If I had not felt any natural liking for the poor thing, pity and contrariness would have given me one. I have always liked decency in language and behaviour, especially in the fair sex. I became her open champion. I saw that she was touched by my attentions, and her glances, being enlivened by a gratitude she dared not express in words, became all the more eloquent.

She was very shy, and so was I. Yet the intimacy which our common shyness seemed to preclude was very speedily formed. Our landlady noticed it and became furious. But her unkindness only improved my position with the girl, who having no champion in the house but myself, was grieved to see me go out and sighed for her protector's return. The sympathy of our hearts and the agreement of our dispositions had soon the usual result. She believed that she saw in me

an honourable man, and she was not mistaken. I believed that I saw in her a girl with feelings, a simple girl without coquetry; and I was not mistaken either. I declared in advance that I would never abandon her, nor ever marry her. Love, esteem, and simple sincerity were the agents of my triumph; and since her heart was tender and virtuous, I did not need to be bold to be fortunate.

Her fear that I should be annoyed at not finding in her what she thought I was seeking was more instrumental than anything else in delaying my happiness. Before she gave herself to me I saw that she was confused and perplexed, anxious to be understood yet without the courage to explain. Far from imagining the true cause of her trouble, I attributed it to a false one, highly insulting to her morals. I thought she was warning me that I should be risking my health, and fell into a perplexity which did not hold me back, but which for some days poisoned my happiness. As we did not in the least understand one another, our conversations on this subject were so many riddles and absurd misunderstandings. She almost thought that I was quite mad; and I hardly knew what to think of her. Finally we came to an explanation. She confessed to me with tears a single fault committed when hardly more than a child, as a result of her ignorance and the cunning of a seducer. As soon as I understood I gave a shout of joy. 'Virginity!' I cried. 'Paris is a fine place, and twenty a fine age to look for that! Ah, my dear Thérèse, I am only too delighted to possess you good and healthy, and not to find something I was not looking for.'

At first I had only been out for amusement. I now saw that I had found more, that I had won a companion. A little intimacy with this excellent girl and a little reflection on my situation made me see that while only thinking of my pleasures, I had contributed greatly to my happiness. What I needed to replace my stifled ambition was a strong affection that would fill my heart. What I needed, in short, was a successor to Mamma; since I could no longer live with her I needed someone to live with her pupil, someone in whom I could find the simplicity and the docile heart which she had found in me. The charms of private and domestic life were necessary to make up for the brilliant career I was renouncing. When I was absolutely alone my heart was empty, but all it needed was another to fill it. Fate had taken away, had alienated from me, at least in part, that heart for whom Nature had formed me. From that time I had been alone; for with me there has never been an intermediate stage between all and nothing. I found in

Thérèse the substitute that I needed. Thanks to her, I have lived as happy a life as the course of events has permitted.

At first I decided to improve her mind; I was wasting my time. Her mind is as Nature made it; culture and teaching have no effect on it. I do not blush to admit that she has never been able to read properly, though she can write fairly well. When I went to live in the Rue Neuve-des-Petits-Champs there was a clock opposite my window, on the Hôtel de Pontchartrain, and for more than a month I tried to teach her to tell the time. But even now she can hardly do so. She has never been able to recite the twelve months of the year in their proper order, and does not know a single figure, despite all the trouble I have taken to teach her. She cannot count money or reckon the price of anything, and the word that comes to her when she is talking is often the opposite of what she means. Once I made a dictionary of her sayings to amuse Mme de Luxembourg, and her blunders have become famous in the circles in which I have lived. But with all her limitations – her stupidity, if you like – this creature is a most excellent adviser in difficult situations. Often, in Switzerland, in England, and in France, when disasters have befallen me, she has seen what I could not see myself, and shown me the best course to pursue; she has extricated me from dangers into which I have blindly flung myself; and among ladies of the highest rank, among nobles and princes, her sound opinions and good sense, her shrewd answers and her general behaviour, have won her universal esteem and compliments upon her qualities, of which I have felt the sincerity.

In the company of those one loves, one's feelings nourish one's head as well as one's heart, and one has little need to look for ideas elsewhere. I lived as pleasantly with my Thérèse as with the finest genius in the world. Her mother, who prided herself on having been brought up with the Marquise de Monpipeau, set up as a wit, tried to guide her daughter's judgement, and by her intriguing marred the simplicity of our relationship. Annoyance with her interferences helped me to some extent to overcome the foolish shame which made me afraid to show myself with Thérèse in public, and we went for little country walks together and took little snacks together, which were delightful to me. This sweet intimacy replaced everything else for me. The future no longer affected me, or only did so as a prolongation of the present; I only wanted to make certain that it would last.

This attachment made all other amusements superfluous and insipid. I ceased to go out except to visit Thérèse; her house became

almost my own. This retired life proved so favourable to my work that in less than three months my opera was entirely finished, words and music. All that remained were some accompaniments and connecting parts to be added, hack work which profoundly bored me. I proposed to Philidor that he should undertake it in return for a share in the profits. He came twice and did some work on the Ovid act, but he could not give himself up to such an exacting task for a distant, and even uncertain, profit. So he never returned, and I finished the job myself.

When my opera was done the next thing was to make something by it. That was a far more difficult job. No one can succeed in Paris who leads a solitary life. I thought of making my way with the help of M. de La Popelinière, to whom Gauffecourt had introduced me on his way back from Geneva. M. de La Popelinière was Rameau's patron; Mme de La Popelinière was his most humble pupil. Rameau was the sun and the stars, as they say, in that house. Supposing that he would be delighted to sponsor the work of one of his disciples, I offered to show him my opera. He refused to look at it, saying that he could not read scores, he found it too tiring. Thereupon M. de La Popelinière said that it could be played to him and offered to collect an orchestra for me to perform some selections. I desired nothing better. Rameau agreed, though he grumbled and went on repeating that it must be a fine work, being composed by one not brought up to the profession who had learnt music on his own. I hurriedly copied out five or six of the best pieces in parts. They gave me some ten instrumentalists; Albert Bérard and M. de Bourbonnais were the singers. Rameau began after the overture to convey by extravagant praises that the thing could not be mine. He did not listen to a single piece without signs of impatience; but after an air for counter-tenor, most robustly and melodiously sung and very brilliantly accompanied, he could contain himself no longer. He addressed me with a lack of manners that shocked everyone, declaring that part of what he had heard was by someone who was a master of the art and the rest by an ignoramus who did not even understand music. Admittedly, my work was unequal and inconsistent. Sometimes it was inspired and sometimes very flat, as any man's must be who relies only on flashes of genius, backed by no mastery of the science. Rameau claimed that he could see nothing in me but a little plagiarist without talent or taste. The musicians, and particularly the master of the house, thought otherwise. M. de Richelieu, who at that time saw a great deal of

Monsieur and, notoriously, of Madame de La Popelinière, heard of my work and wanted to hear it complete, intending to have it played at Court if he was pleased with it. It was performed by a full chorus and orchestra, at the King's expense, at M. de Bonneval's, the Master of Court Entertainments. It was conducted by Francœur, and the effect was surprising. The Duke was continually cheering and applauding; and at the end of one chorus, in the Tasso act, he got up, came to me, shook me by the hand, and said: 'M. Rousseau, this is delightful music. I have never heard anything lovelier. I should like to perform your work at Versailles.' M. de La Popelinière, who was present, said nothing. Rameau had been invited, but had refused to come. Mme de La Popelinière gave me a very cold reception at her toilet next day and pretended to depreciate my work. She said that though a little glitter had dazzled M. de Richelieu at first, he had soon come to himself, and that she advised me not to build any hopes on my opera. The Duke, who arrived shortly afterwards, spoke to me in quite a different tone. He made flattering remarks about my talents, and seemed still disposed to have my piece played before the King. 'There is only the Tasso act that will not pass at Court,' he said. 'You will have to write another.' These few words were enough for me to go and shut myself in my room; and in three weeks I replaced the Tasso act by another on the subject of Hesiod inspired by a Muse. I found means of introducing into it some account of the history of my talents, and of the jealousy with which Rameau had been pleased to honour them. This new act did not soar so high and was better sustained than the Tasso. The music was equally fine and the composition much better; and if the two other acts had been as good the whole piece might have been played with success. But as I was putting the finishing touches to it, another undertaking interrupted this one.

1745-1747 In the winter after the battle of Fontenoy there were many gala performances at Versailles, among them several operas at the Théâtre des Petites-Écuries. One of these was Voltaire's play *The Princess of Navarre*,* set to music by Rameau. The piece had just been altered and had its title changed to *The Feasts of Ramiro*.† This change of subject demanded several alterations in the incidental interludes, both in the words and music; and someone had to be found capable of dealing with both. Voltaire – who

* *La Princesse de Navarre*.

† *Fêtes de Ramire*.

was then in Lorraine – and Rameau were working on the opera *The Temple of Glory*,* and could not attend to the matter. M. de Richelieu thought of me, suggested to me that I should undertake it, and in order that I should be able to judge what there was to do he sent me the poem and the music separately. In the first place, I was unwilling to touch the words without their author's express permission; and I wrote a very straightforward letter to him on the subject, as was only right. Here is his reply, the original of which is in the packet labelled A, No. 1.

15 December 1745

In you are united, sir, two talents which hitherto have always been separate, and these are two good reasons why I should respect you and endeavour to love you. I sympathize with you for having employed these two talents on a work not entirely worthy of them. Some months ago the Duke de Richelieu gave me positive orders to compose at a moment's notice a poor little sketch consisting of a few insipid and fragmentary scenes, to be fitted to certain songs and dances utterly unsuited to them. I obeyed him to the letter; I worked very fast and very badly, and sent my miserable scrawl to the Duke, feeling quite certain that it would not do or that I should have to correct it. Fortunately it is in your hands, and you can decide its fate; I have entirely put it from my thoughts. I have no doubt that you have corrected all the errors I must have made in the hasty composition of this simple sketch, and that you have filled in all that was missing.

One stupid blunder I remember in particular. In the scenes linking the interludes I omitted to explain how the Princess Grenadine suddenly passes from a prison into a garden or a palace. As it is not a magician but a Spanish nobleman who is giving the festivities in her honour, I do not think that anything ought to be done by way of enchantment. I beg you, sir, to look this passage over; I have only a confused memory of it. See whether it is really necessary for the prison to open and for our princess to leave it for a fine gilt and lacquered palace, especially prepared for her. I know very well that all this is wretched stuff, and that it is unworthy of a thinking being to make a serious matter of such trifles. But since ultimately it is a case of giving as little displeasure as possible we must use all the intelligence we can even on a miserable opera interlude.

I leave everything in the hands of M. Ballod and yourself, and hope soon to have the honour of tendering you my thanks and of assuring you, sir, how gratified I am to be, etc.

There is no reason to be surprised at the great politeness of this letter when compared to the somewhat brusque tone of those which he has since written to me. He supposed that I was in high favour with the

* *Le Temple de la gloire*.

Duke de Richelieu and his well-known diplomatic suppleness prompted him to show considerable politeness to a novice until such time as he had gauged the measure of his influence.

With M. de Voltaire's authority, and under no necessity of considering Rameau, who was only out to injure me, I set to work and in two months my job was done. As for the verse, there was very little of it. I only tried to make the difference of styles imperceptible, and I had the presumption to believe that I had succeeded. My work on the music was longer and more laborious; not only had I to compose several introductory pieces, among them an overture, but all the recitatives devolved upon me and were extremely difficult, since I had to link, often by a few verses and by the rapidest of modulations, orchestral pieces and choruses in the most different keys. For in order that Rameau should not accuse me of having spoilt his arias I was unwilling to alter or transpose any of them. The recitatives were a success. They were well accented, most vigorous and, what is more, perfectly modulated. The thought of these two great men, with whom they were so kind as to associate me, had acted favourably on my genius; and I can say that in this thankless and inglorious task of which the public could not even be informed, I very seldom fell below the level of my models.

The opera, with the changes I had made, was rehearsed at the grand Opera House. I was the only one of the three authors present. Voltaire was away, and Rameau did not come, or did not show himself.

The words of the first monologue were most mournful. They began:

Come, death, and terminate the miseries of my life!*

I had been obliged to compose music to suit it. Yet it was on this point that Mme de La Popelinière founded her criticism. She protested with some bitterness that I had written funeral music. M. de Richelieu judiciously began by inquiring whose were the verses of this monologue. I showed him the manuscript he had sent me, which proved that they were Voltaire's. 'In that case,' said he, 'only Voltaire is to blame.' During the rehearsal everything that was mine was successively censured by Mme de La Popelinière and defended by M. de Richelieu. But in the end I found the opposition too strong, and was informed that several alterations were necessary in my work, about which I must consult M. Rameau. Deeply distressed at receiving this verdict in place of the praises I had expected, and which were

* O mort! viens terminer les malheurs de ma vie!

certainly due to me, I returned home sick at heart. Tired out and consumed by grief, I fell ill, and for six weeks was not fit to leave my room.

Rameau was commissioned to make the alterations indicated by Mme de La Popelinière, and sent to ask me for the overture of my own opera, so that it could be played in place of the one I had just composed. Luckily I saw the trick and refused. As it was only five or six days till the performance, there was no time to compose another, and mine had to be left in. It was in the Italian style, which was something new in France at that time. Nevertheless it was liked, and I heard from M. de Valmalette, the King's chamberlain and son-in-law of my relative and friend M. Mussard, that the connoisseurs had been very pleased with my work and that the general public had not been able to distinguish it from Rameau's. But Rameau himself, in concert with Mme de La Popelinière, took measures to prevent its being known that I had contributed to it. On the texts which are handed round to the audience, and on which the authors' names are always given, Voltaire alone was mentioned; Rameau preferred his name to be suppressed rather than see it associated with mine.

As soon as I was fit to go out I resolved to call on M. de Richelieu. I had lost my opportunity; he had just left for Dunkirk where he was to command the expedition intended for Scotland. On his return I told myself, to excuse my laziness, that it was now too late. As I never saw him again I forfeited the honour that my work deserved and that I feel it should have earned me. My time, my labours, my disappointment, my illness and the expenses it entailed, all went for nothing; I did not get a halfpenny in return, or rather in compensation. Nevertheless, I have always thought that the Duke de Richelieu conceived a liking for me and thought well of my talents; but my bad luck and Mme de La Popelinière combined entirely nullified the effects of his goodwill.

I was quite unable to understand that woman's dislike of me; I had been at some pains to please her and had paid her regular court. Gauffecourt explained the reasons to me. 'First of all,' he said, 'there is her friendship for Rameau, whose avowed advocate she is and who will not stand any competitors; and secondly, an original sin which damns you in her eyes and for which she will never pardon you – that of being a Genevese.' He explained to me, as the reason, that the Abbé Hubert, who was from Geneva and was a sincere friend of M. de La Popelinière, had tried hard to prevent his marrying this woman,

whose character he knew well; and that after her marriage she had vowed an implacable hatred against him and against all Genevese. 'Although La Popelinière feels friendly towards you,' he added, 'as indeed I know, do not count on his backing. He is fond of his wife; she hates you; she is spiteful and cunning, and you will never gain anything from that household.' I took his word for it.

At about that time this same Gauffecourt rendered me a service of which I stood in great need. I had just lost my esteemed father who had been about sixty years old.* I did not feel his loss as keenly as I should have done at another date, when less preoccupied with the difficulties of my situation. I had never been willing in his lifetime to claim what was left of my mother's property, from which he had drawn a trifling interest; I had no longer scruples on that score after his death. But the lack of legal proof that my brother had died made a difficulty which Gauffecourt undertook to remove, and which he did remove through the good offices of De Lolme, the lawyer. As I was in the greatest need of that small capital, and as the outcome was in doubt, I waited for definite news with the liveliest impatience. One evening, on returning home, I found the letter which must contain it, and picked it up to open with a tremor of impatience of which I was inwardly ashamed. 'What!' I said to myself in scorn. 'Can Jean-Jacques let himself be such a slave to self-interest and curiosity?' Immediately I put the letter back on the mantelpiece. Then I undressed, went quietly to bed, slept better than usual and got up rather late next day without remembering my letter. I noticed it as I was dressing, and unhurriedly opened it; I found a bill of exchange inside. It gave me several pleasures at once, but I can affirm that the keenest of them was a consciousness of victory over myself. There might be twenty similar cases that I could quote in my life, but I am too short of time to be able to relate everything. I sent a small part of this money to my poor Mamma, with tears of regret for the happy time when I should have laid it all at her feet. All her letters revealed her distress. She sent me piles of recipes and secret remedies by which she alleged I could make my fortune and hers. Already the consciousness of her misery was closing her heart and narrowing her mind. The little I sent her fell to the rogues who surrounded her. She got no profit from anything and I was put off by the thought of dividing what I needed myself with those wretches, especially after the vain endeavour I had made to get her out of their hands, as will be told hereafter.

[* Actually seventy-five.]

Time slipped away, and the money with it. We were two, or rather four or, to be more accurate, seven or eight. For though Thérèse was disinterested to an almost unparalleled degree, her mother was not like her. As soon as she found herself a little better off, thanks to me, she sent for her whole family to share in her good fortune. Sisters, sons, daughters, granddaughters, they all came, all except her eldest daughter who was married to the director of the coach service at Angers. Everything that I did for Thérèse was deflected by her mother for the benefit of their hungry mouths. As I was not dealing with a greedy person, and was not under the influence of a mad passion, I committed no foolish acts. Content to keep Thérèse decently but without luxury and safe from pressing needs, I agreed that what she earned by her work should go entirely to her mother's profit, and I did not limit myself to that. But, by a fatality which pursued me, whilst Mamma was a prey to her vampires, Thérèse was a prey to her family, and I could do nothing in either case to profit the person I intended to. It was strange that the youngest of Mme Le Vasseur's children – the only one she had not provided with a dowry – was the only one who supported her father and mother; and that, after having been for a long time knocked about by her brothers and sisters, and even by her nieces, the poor girl was now plundered by them, without being able to defend herself from their thefts any better than she had done from their blows. Only one of her nieces, Goton Leduc by name, was quite pleasant and good natured, but she was spoiled by the lessons and example of the others. As I often saw them together I called them by the names they used for one another. I called the niece *niece* and the aunt *aunt*, and both of them called me *uncle*. Hence the name of *aunt* by which I have continued to call Thérèse, and which my friends have sometimes used also by way of a joke.

Clearly, in my situation, I could not waste a moment before trying to extricate myself. Concluding that M. de Richelieu had forgotten me, and expecting nothing further from the direction of the Court, I made some attempts to get my opera accepted in Paris. But I encountered difficulties which required some time to overcome, and I was more hard pressed every day. I decided to offer my comedy *Narcissus* to the Italian theatre. It was accepted, and I was given a free pass to the theatre, which greatly pleased me; but that was all. I could never succeed in getting my piece put on; and growing tired of paying court to the actors, I gave them up. Finally I came to the last expedient remaining to me, and the only one I should really have

attempted. Whilst I had been visiting M. de La Popelinière's house, I had stayed away from M. Dupin's. The two ladies, although related, did not get on and never met. There were no relations between the two houses, and only Thieriot was at home in both. He was requested to try and secure my readmission to M. Dupin's. M. de Francueil was then studying natural history and chemistry, and was making a collection. I heard that he was aspiring to the Academy of Sciences. For that reason he wanted to write a book, and he considered that I might be of some use to him in this undertaking. Mme Dupin, who was also meditating a book, had rather similar views about me. They would have liked to employ me in common as a sort of secretary, and this was the course that Thieriot urged on them. I required as a preliminary that M. de Francueil should use his own influence and Jelyote's to get my piece rehearsed at the Opera. He agreed. *The Galant Muses* was played through several times at the Magasin* and then in the main theatre. There was a great crowd at the dress rehearsal and several items were much applauded. During the performance, however, which was very badly conducted by Revel, I myself felt that the piece would not be accepted, indeed that it was in no state to be presented without great alterations. So I withdrew it without a word, and did not expose myself to a rejection. But I plainly saw, from several indications, that even if the work had been perfect it would not have passed. M. de Francueil had certainly promised to get it a rehearsal, but not to secure its acceptance. He had kept his word to the letter. I have always imagined, on this occasion and many others, that neither he nor Mme Dupin were at all anxious for me to acquire any considerable reputation in the world, in case people might suppose when seeing their books that they had grafted their talents on mine. However, as Mme Dupin has always considered mine very slight, and has never employed me except to write at her dictation or to undertake purely learned researches, the accusation, especially in her case, would have been a most unjust one.

1747-1749 This last failure completed my discouragement. I gave up all hopes of advancement and fame, and without another thought for my talents, real or imaginary, that brought me so little profit, devoted my time and energy to procuring a livelihood for myself and my dear Thérèse, in the manner

[* The storehouse for theatrical properties, which was used for rehearsals.]

most pleasing to those undertaking to provide it. I attached myself completely, therefore, to Mme Dupin and M. de Francueil. This did not plunge me into great affluence; for with the annual eight or nine hundred francs which I earned for the first two years I had scarcely enough to provide for my most urgent needs, since I was forced to rent a furnished room in their neighbourhood, a rather expensive quarter, and at the same time to pay for another lodging at the other end of Paris, at the top of the Rue Saint-Jacques, where, whatever the weather, I went to sup nearly every evening. I soon got into the way of my new occupation, and even came to like it. I became fond of chemistry, and M. de Francueil and I took several courses in it at M. Rouille's. Then we started some indifferent scribbling on that subject, of which we hardly knew the elements. In 1747 we went to spend the autumn in Touraine, at the Château de Chenonceaux, a royal mansion upon the Cher, built by Henry II for Diana of Poitiers, whose initials can still be seen there, and now owned by M. Dupin, the farmer-general. We greatly enjoyed ourselves in this lovely spot, and lived very well; I became as fat as a monk. We had a great deal of music. I composed several trios for voices, full of vigour and harmony, of which I shall perhaps speak again in my supplement, if I ever write one. We acted comedies, and I wrote one in three acts entitled *The Bold Engagement*,* which took me a fortnight and which will be found among my papers; its only merit is that it is very gay. I composed some other little things there, including a play in verse entitled *Sylvia's Avenue*,† after a walk in the park that ran beside the Cher; and all this I did without interrupting my study of chemistry or the work I was doing for Mme Dupin.

Whilst I was growing plump at Chenonceaux my poor Thérèse was doing the same in Paris, though in another way; and when I returned I found the work I had set under way further advanced than I had expected. Considering my position, this would have thrown me into the greatest embarrassment if some table companions had not provided me with the only means of extricating myself. This is one of those essential details which I cannot relate too baldly. For were I to comment on them, I should have either to excuse or blame myself, and here I have no business to do either.

During Altuna's stay in Paris, instead of going to an eating-house, he and I usually took our meals in the neighbourhood, nearly opposite

* *L'Engagement téméraire.*

† *L'Allée de Sylvie.*

the Opera cul-de-sac, at the house of a certain Mme Selle, a tailor's wife, who served pretty poor food, though her table was always popular on account of the good and respectable company that frequented it. For no stranger was received there; one had to be introduced by one of the habitual diners. Commander de Graville, an old rake, all wit and courtesy but foul in his language, lodged there and attracted a giddy and brilliant company of young Guard and Musketeeer officers. Commander de Nonant, squire of all the Opera girls, brought all the news every day from that centre of vice. M. Duplessis, a retired lieutenant-colonel, a good and respectable old man, and M. Ancelet,* a Musketeer officer, kept these young people in some kind of order. The place was also frequented by merchants, financiers, and provision dealers, but well-bred and honourable men who were distinguished in their trades. There were M. de Besse, M. de Forcade, and others whose names I have forgotten. In fact one met people of standing of all classes, except priests and lawyers, whom I never found there, for it was agreed that none were to be introduced. The company was fairly numerous and very gay, though not noisy, and the conversation was risky but never vulgar. The old commander, despite the broadness of his stories, never forgot his old courtly good manners, and never did a foul word escape his lips which was not so witty that any woman would have pardoned him. He gave the tone to the whole table. All the young men recounted their affairs with equal elegance and freedom, and there was no lack of tales about girls, since there was a bevy of them close at hand. For the passage through which one came to Mme de Selle's house also led to the shop of Mme Duchapt, a famous dressmaker, who at that time employed some very pretty ones, with whom our gentleman would go and chat before or after dinner. I should have amused myself in the same way if I had possessed the courage. I went to dine at Mme de Selle's fairly often after Altuna left,

* It was to this M. Ancelet that I gave a little comedy of mine entitled *The Prisoners of War*, which I wrote after the French defeats in Bavaria and Bohemia, and which I never dared show or acknowledge, and that for the singular reason that the King of France and the French have perhaps never received such high or genuine praise as in that play, and that as an avowed Republican and oppositionist I had not the courage to confess myself the panegyrist of a nation all of whose principles were the opposite of my own. More distressed by France's misfortunes than the French themselves, I was afraid of being accused of flattery and cowardice when expressing my sincere affection, the date and origins of which I have mentioned in my First Part, but which I was ashamed to reveal.

and heard a lot of most amusing stories there. Gradually indeed I adopted not, thank Heaven, the morals but the principles I found accepted there. Honest men injured, deception of husbands, seductions and secret childbirths were the most common themes; and the man who best helped to stock the Foundling Hospital was always the most applauded. I caught the habit, and modelled my way of thinking upon that which I saw prevalent among these very pleasant and fundamentally very decent people. 'Since it is the custom of the country,' I told myself, 'if one lives there one must adopt it.' That was the way out I was looking for. I cheerfully resolved to take it without the least scruple; indeed the only scruples that I had to overcome were Thérèse's, and I had the greatest difficulty in the world in persuading her to accept this sole means of saving her honour. But her mother had another fear, that of a fresh embarrassment in the form of a brat, and she came to my aid; Thérèse gave in. We chose a discreet and safe midwife, Mlle Gouin by name, who lived at the Pointe Sainte-Eustache, to undertake the depositing of the baby; and when her time was come, Thérèse was taken by her mother to be delivered at Mlle Gouin's. I went to see her there several times, and took her a set of initials which I had written on two cards, one of which was put in the child's swaddling clothes. It was then deposited by the midwife at the office of the Foundling Hospital in the usual manner. In the following year the same inconvenience was removed by the same expedient, except for the initials, which were forgotten. No more serious reflections on my part, and no greater willingness on the mother's; she obeyed with a sigh. In due course it will be seen what vicissitudes this fatal conduct occasioned in my way of thinking and also in my destiny. For the present let us confine ourselves to this first period. Its consequences, which were as cruel as they were unforeseen, will force me to return to it only too often.

I will note here the date of my first acquaintance with Mme d'Épinay, whose name will often recur in these memoirs. She had been a Mlle d'Esclavelles, and had just married M. d'Épinay, son of M. de Lalive de Bellegarde, the farmer-general. Her husband, like M. de Franceuil, was a music lover. She was musical too, and devotion to the art led to a great intimacy between these three. M. de Franceuil introduced me to Mme de Épinay, and I went with him sometimes to supper with her. She was pleasant, witty, and talented, and certainly a desirable acquaintance to make. But she had a friend, a Mlle d'Ette, who was said to be very spiteful, and who lived with the

Chevalier de Valory, whose reputation was not good. I think that the society of this couple harmed Mme d'Épinay, who although of a very exacting disposition had excellent natural qualities to correct or atone for her extravagances. M. de Francueil inspired in her some of the friendship which he himself felt for me, and told me of the relationship between them, of which, for that reason, I would not speak here if it had not become so public as not even to be concealed from M. d'Épinay. M. de Francueil told me some very strange secrets about that lady, which she never confided to me herself, and which she never supposed that I knew. For I never opened, and never will open, my lips on the subject, to her or to anyone else. All these confidences from one side and another made my situation most embarrassing, particularly with Mme de Francueil, who knew me well enough not to distrust me even though I was intimate with her rival. As best I could I consoled that poor woman, whose husband certainly did not return the love she felt for him. I listened to each of the three separately, and kept their confidences so scrupulously that not one of them ever extracted from me any of the secrets of the other two; and at the same time I did not conceal from either lady my affection for her rival. Mme de Francueil tried to make use of me in several directions but had to stomach formal refusals; and Mme d'Épinay, when once she wanted to entrust me with a letter for Francueil, not only received a refusal but a plain declaration that if she wanted to dismiss me from her house for ever she had only to make me the same proposal a second time. But I must be fair to Mme d'Épinay. Far from seeming annoyed by my behaviour, she praised it to Francueil, and welcomed me no less warmly thereafter. In this way, despite the stormy relations between these three people, whom I had to manage, on whom I to some extent depended, and of whom I was sincerely fond, I preserved their friendship, their esteem, and their confidence to the end, whilst behaving myself gently and considerately, though always with honesty and firmness. Notwithstanding my stupidity and awkwardness, Mme d'Épinay persisted in taking me to the entertainments at La Chevette, a château near Saint-Denis, belonging to M. de Bellegarde. There was a stage there where they often acted plays. I was given a part which I studied for six months without a break, but I had to be prompted from beginning to end of the performance. After this trial no more parts were offered me.

In making Mme d'Épinay's acquaintance I also made that of her stepsister, Mlle de Bellegarde, who soon afterwards became Countess

de Houdetot. The first time I saw her was just before her marriage; she chatted to me for a long time with that charming familiarity that is natural to her. I found her very pleasant; but I was far from foreseeing that one day this young person would decide my fate, and drag me, though in all innocence, into the abyss where I am to-day.

Although I have not mentioned Diderot since my return from Venice, nor my friend M. Roguin either, I had not neglected either of them, and had indeed grown daily more intimate at least with the former. He had a Nanette, as I had a Thérèse, which gave us one more circumstance in common. But there was a difference. My Thérèse, though as good looking a woman as his Nanette, possessed just that mildness of disposition and pleasantness of character that will attract any decent man, while his Nanette was a foul-mouthed shrew and displayed no qualities that could compensate, in others' eyes, for her lack of education. He married her all the same; which was very laudable, if he had promised to do so. But I had made no such promise, and was in no hurry to imitate him.

I had also become intimate with the Abbé de Condillac, who, like myself, cut no figure in the literary world, but who was born to be what he has become to-day. I was the first, perhaps, to see his stature, and to estimate him at his true worth. He seemed also to have taken a liking to me; and whilst I was confined to my room in the Rue Jean-Saint-Denis near the Opera, writing my Hesiod act, he sometimes came to take a solitary Dutch treat of a dinner with me. He was then engaged on his *Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge*, which was his first work. When it was finished, the problem was to find a bookseller who would undertake it. Paris booksellers are hard and overbearing with authors who are just beginning; and metaphysics, not then in fashion, did not offer a very attractive subject. I spoke to Diderot about Condillac and his work; and introduced them to one another. They were born to agree, and they did so. Diderot induced Durand the bookseller to take the Abbé's manuscript, and that great metaphysician received from his first book – and that almost as a favour – a hundred crowns, which perhaps he would not have earned but for me. As we all lived in widely different quarters the three of us met once a week at the Palais-Royal, and went to dine together at the Hôtel du Panier-Fleuri. These little weekly dinners must greatly have pleased Diderot; for though he almost always failed to keep his appointments, even with women, he never missed one of them. There I drew up the plan for a periodical to be called *Le*

*Persifleur** which Diderot and I were to write alternately, and this led to my becoming acquainted with d'Alembert,† to whom Diderot had spoken of it. Unforeseen events stood in our way, however, and this plan went no further.

These two authors had just undertaken *The Encyclopaedic Dictionary*,‡ which was at first to be merely a sort of translation of Chambers, more or less resembling James's *Dictionary of Medicine*, which Diderot had just completed. He wanted me to take some part in this second enterprise, and suggested that I should undertake the articles on music. I agreed, and wrote them very badly in a great hurry within the three months he had given me, in common with all the writers chosen to collaborate in that work. But I was the only one who was ready by the appointed date. I handed him my manuscript which I had had copied by a lackey of M. de Francueil's by the name of Dupont, who wrote a very good hand and to whom I paid ten crowns out of my own pocket, for which I have never been reimbursed. Diderot had promised me on behalf of the booksellers a fee, which he has never mentioned to me again; nor have I mentioned it to him.

This project of the Encyclopaedia was interrupted by his arrest. His *Philosophical Thoughts*§ had involved him in some trouble which had led to no consequences. He did not come off so easily, however, with his *Letter on the Blind*,|| which contained nothing blameworthy except for a few personal allusions, which shocked Mme Dupré de Saint-Maur and M. de Réaumur, and for which he was confined in the keep of Vincennes. No words could ever express the anguish I felt at my friend's misfortune. My melancholy imagination took alarm, for it always paints things at their blackest. I thought that he would be there for the rest of his life, and the idea almost drove me mad. I wrote to Mme de Pompadour, begging her to procure his release, or to get permission for me to be imprisoned with him. I received no reply to my letter; it was too unreasonable to be effective, and I do not flatter myself that it contributed to the easing of poor Diderot's hardships, though the severity of his confinement was subsequently relaxed. But if it had continued to be as rigorous as at first, I think that I should have died of despair at the foot of that accursed keep. However, if my letter produced little effect I did not claim much credit for it, for I only mentioned it to one or two people and never to Diderot himself.

* The Chaffer.

[† Jean Le Rond d'Alembert (1717-83).]

‡ *Le Dictionnaire encyclopédique*.

§ *Pensées philosophiques*.

|| *Lettre sur les aveugles*.

BOOK EIGHT

1749 I had to pause at the end of the last book. With this one starts the long chain of my misfortunes, in its very beginnings.

Having lived in two of the most brilliant houses in Paris, I had not failed, despite my lack of address, to make some acquaintances in them. At Mme Dupin's I had got to know, amongst others, the young hereditary Prince of Saxe-Gotha and his tutor Baron de Thun; and at Mme de La Popelinière's M. Seguy, Baron de Thun's friend, who was known in the literary world for his fine edition of the poet Rousseau. The Baron invited M. Seguy and myself to spend a day or two at Fontenay-sous-Bois, where the Prince had a house. We went, and as I passed Vincennes and saw the keep I felt a pang at my heart, of which the Baron saw signs in my face. At supper the Prince spoke of Diderot's imprisonment; and the Baron, in order to make me speak, accused the prisoner of imprudence, a quality which I myself displayed by the impetuous manner in which I defended him. This excess of zeal was pardoned in one moved by the misfortunes of a friend, and the subject was changed. There were two Germans there, members of the Prince's suite. One, M. Klupffel* by name, a man of great intelligence, was his chaplain, and later, after supplanting the Baron, became his tutor; the other was a young man called M. Grimm, who was acting as his reader until he could find some other place, which his very modest wardrobe betrayed his urgent need of doing. On that first evening Klupffel and I began a relationship which soon became a friendship. My acquaintance with Master Grimm did not progress quite so fast; he hardly obtruded himself, and was far from assuming that confident tone which came to him with his subsequent prosperity. At dinner next day he talked about music: he talked well. I was quite delighted when I heard that he could accompany on the clavichord. After dinner music was brought in, and we played for the rest of the day on the Prince's instrument. And so began a friendship which was so sweet to me at first, but afterwards so fatal, and of which I shall have so much to say hereafter.

* Actually Emmanuel Christoph Klupffel, founder of the *Almanach de Gotha* (1712-76).

On returning to Paris I received the agreeable news that Diderot had been released from the keep and that he was now confined, upon parole, to the castle and park of Vincennes, with permission to see his friends. How painful it was that I could not hurry there that very moment! But I was detained at Mme Dupin's for two or three days by duties that could not be neglected, and only after three or four centuries of impatience did I fly into my friend's arms! An indescribable moment! He was not alone; d'Alembert and the treasurer of the Sainte-Chapelle were with him. I saw only him as I entered; I made one bound, uttered one cry, pressed my face to his, and embraced him tightly, speaking to him only with my tears and sighs, for my joy and affection choked me. His first movement as he emerged from my arms was to turn to the priest and say, 'You see, sir, how my friends love me.' Entirely overcome by my feelings, I did not reflect at the time on his method of turning them to his advantage; but on thinking it over sometimes since then I have invariably concluded that, had I been in Diderot's place, that would not have been the first idea which would have occurred to me.

I found him much affected by his imprisonment. Close confinement had had a terrible effect on him; and though he was comfortable at the castle and free to take walks in the park, which is not even walled, he needed his friends' company to save him from giving way to his melancholy. I was certainly the one who had most sympathy for his sufferings. I thought I should also be the one whose presence would be the most consoling; and every other day at least, although my employment was most exacting, I went, either alone or with his wife, to spend the afternoon with him.

The summer of that year 1749 was excessively hot. Vincennes is some six miles from Paris. In no condition to pay for cabs, I walked there at two in the afternoon when I was alone, and I went fast so as to arrive early. The trees along the road, always lopped according to the custom of the country, hardly gave any shade; and often I was so prostrated with heat and weariness that I lay down on the ground, unable to go further. In order to slacken my pace, I thought of taking a book with me. One day I took the *Mercur de France* and, glancing through it as I walked, I came upon this question propounded by the Dijon Academy for the next year's prize: Has the progress of the sciences and arts done more to corrupt morals or improve them?

The moment I read this I beheld another universe and became another man. Although I have a lively recollection of the effect they

produced upon me, the details have escaped me since I recorded them in one of my four letters to M. de Malesherbes. This is one of the peculiarities of my memory, which is worth noting down. It only serves me for so long as I need to rely on it; as soon as I commit its burden to paper it deserts me; and once I have written a thing down, I entirely cease to remember it. This peculiarity extends also to the matter of music. Before I studied it I knew great numbers of songs by heart; but since I learned to sing from written music, I have been unable to remember any of them, and I doubt whether to-day I could repeat a single one of all my favourites right through.

What I remember quite distinctly about this occasion is that when I reached Vincennes I was in a state of agitation bordering on delirium. Diderot noticed it; I told him the cause and read him Fabricius's Soliloquy which I had written in pencil under an oak tree. He encouraged me to give my ideas wings and compete for the prize. I did so, and from that moment I was lost. All the rest of my life and of my misfortunes followed inevitably as a result of that moment's madness.

My feelings rose with the most inconceivable rapidity to the level of my ideas. All my little passions were stifled by an enthusiasm for truth, liberty, and virtue; and the most astonishing thing is that this fermentation worked in my heart for more than four or five years as intensely perhaps as it has ever worked in the heart of any man on earth.

I composed this essay in a most singular manner, and one which I have almost always followed for my other works. I devoted the night hours to it when I could not sleep. I meditated in bed with closed eyes, and shaped and reshaped my sentences in my head with incredible labour. Then, when I was finally content with them, I committed them to my memory till such time as I could put them on paper. But the break caused by my getting up and dressing made me lose everything, and when I had sat down before my paper hardly a sentence came to me of all those I had composed. It occurred to me, therefore, to take Mme Le Vasseur as my secretary. I had established her, with her daughter and her husband, rather nearer to me now and, to spare the cost of a servant, she came every morning to light my fire and attend to my minor wants. When she arrived I dictated to her from my bed my work of the preceding night; and this method, which I have followed for a long while, has saved for me much that I might otherwise have forgotten.

When this essay was finished I showed it to Diderot, who was pleased with it and suggested a few corrections. The work, however,

though full of strength and fervour, is completely lacking in logic and order. Of all those that have proceeded from my pen it is the most feebly argued, the most deficient in proportion and harmony. But, whatever talents one may have been born with, the art of writing is not learned all at once.

I sent the piece off without speaking of it to anyone else except, I think, to Grimm, with whom I began to be on intimate terms after his entry into the Count de Frièse's* house. He had a clavichord which brought us together, and at which I spent all my free moments with him, singing Italian airs and barcarolles, without pause or intermission from morning till evening, or rather from evening till morning; and if I was not to be found at M. Dupin's I was certain to be discovered at M. Grimm's, or at least in his company, either out for a walk or at the theatre. I gave up going to the Comédie-Italienne, at which I had a pass but which he did not like, and paid to go to the Comédie-Française, of which he was very fond. At length I became so firmly attached to this young man and we became so inseparable that even poor 'aunt' was neglected. That is to say that I saw less of her, for never in the whole of my life has my affection for her diminished.

This impossibility of dividing the little spare time I had in the way that I should have liked, renewed and gave added strength to a desire which I had long felt to share an establishment with Thérèse. But the drawback of her numerous family and, what was more, the lack of money to buy furniture had hitherto deterred me. The opportunity of making an effort occurred and I took advantage of it. M. de Francueil and Mme Dupin realized that eight or nine hundred francs a year could not possibly be sufficient for me, and increased my salary of their own accord to fifty *louis*; and, furthermore, when Mme Dupin learned that I wanted to furnish my rooms she gave me some additional help towards this. Taking the furniture which Thérèse already had, we put everything together, and rented a few rooms in the Hôtel de Languedoc, in the Rue de Grenelle-Saint-Honoré, which was kept by very nice people. We settled in as comfortably as we could, and stayed there peacefully and pleasantly until my move to the Hermitage.

Thérèse's father was a very mild old fellow and extremely frightened of his wife whom he had nicknamed The Hanging Judge,†

* Actually Count von Friesen, nephew of Marshal de Saxe.

[† Le lieutenant criminal: the magistrate of a Paris court. The translation, although rather free, gives the force of the nickname.]

a title which Grimm subsequently transferred to her daughter. Mme Le Vasseur was not without intelligence, that is to say shrewdness; she even prided herself on her civility and worldly manners. But she had a mysterious wheedling tone that I found unbearable and was always misadvising her daughter, and trying to make her dishonest with me. She also tried to set each of my friends separately against each other and against myself. In other respects she was a fairly good mother because she found it paid her to be so, and concealed her daughter's faults because she profited by them. But though I loaded the woman with cares and attentions and little presents and did all I could to gain her affection, because of my utter inability to do so she was the one cause of trouble in my little establishment. Otherwise I can say that during those six or seven years I enjoyed the most perfect domestic happiness that human frailty permits. Thérèse had the heart of an angel; our affection grew with our intimacy, and we felt more strongly every day that we were made for one another. If our pleasures could be described, their very simplicity would appear absurd: our walks, alone together, outside the town where I munificently spent eight or ten *sous* at a beer house; our little suppers at the open window, sitting opposite one another on two low chairs placed on a trunk which was as wide as the embrasure. In this position the window ledge served us as a table, we breathed the fresh air, we could see the distant country and the passers-by and, even though we were on the fourth floor, we looked down into the street as we ate. Who can describe, who can feel, the charm of these meals at which the dishes consisted of no more than a quartern loaf of coarse bread, a few cherries, a little piece of cheese, and half a pint of wine which we drank between us? Friendship, confidence, intimacy, peace of mind, what delicious seasonings they make! Sometimes we sat there till midnight without noticing it, and would never have thought of the time unless informed of it by the old lady. But let us leave these details, which will seem tame or ludicrous. For I have always said and felt that true joy defies description.

At about this same time I indulged in a cruder pleasure, the last of its kind with which I have to reproach myself. I have said that Klupffel the minister was a pleasant fellow; my relationship with him was almost as close as with Grimm, and became equally intimate. Sometimes they dined with me. These meals, which were rather more than simple, were enlivened by Klupffel's wild and witty remarks and by the coarse and German humour of Grimm, who had not yet

turned purist. Luxury did not preside at our little orgies; but gaiety made up for it, and we so enjoyed each other's company that we could never break the party up. Klupffel had furnished some rooms for a little girl who, however, remained at everyone's disposal because he could not entirely keep her himself. One evening, on going into a café, we met him coming out on his way to sup with her. We chaffed him, and he took a gallant revenge by inviting us to share their supper, at which he chaffed us in his turn. The poor creature seemed to me of a fairly good disposition, very gentle and ill-adapted to her profession, for which an old witch who lived with her did her best to groom her. The excellent Klupffel did not want to do the honours by halves, and we all three went in turn into the next room with the little girl, who did not know whether to laugh or to cry. Grimm has always sworn that he never touched her; it was only for the pleasure of making us impatient that he stayed with her so long; but if he refrained it is not very likely that it was out of any scruples, for before he went to the Count de Frièse he had lived in a brothel in this same Saint-Roch quarter.

I left the Rue des Moineaux, where the girl lived, feeling as ashamed as Saint-Preux when he left the house where he had been made drunk, and I vividly remembered my own story when I wrote his. Thérèse perceived from certain signs, though principally from my air of confusion, that I had something on my mind; I relieved myself of my guilty conscience by a free and frank confession. It was as well. For next day Grimm came in triumph to give her an exaggerated account of my offence, and since then he has never failed maliciously to remind her of it, which is the more reprehensible in him since I had taken him freely and voluntarily into my confidence and had therefore the right to expect that he would not make me repent it. Never was I more conscious than on that occasion of my Thérèse's goodness of heart; for she was more shocked by Grimm's behaviour than by my infidelity, and I received nothing from her but touching and tender reproaches, in which I never perceived the slightest trace of anger.

That good girl's kindness of heart was equalled only by her simple-mindedness, which tells the whole story. But one example that occurs to me is nevertheless worth adding. I had told her that Klupffel was a minister and chaplain to the Prince of Saxe-Gotha. A minister was so extraordinary a person in her eyes that, muddling up two quite unrelated ideas, she took it into her head that Klupffel was the Pope. I thought she was mad the first time she told me, on my coming home,

that the Pope had come to see me. I made her explain, and went off at top speed to tell this story to Grimm and Klupffel. Ever afterwards he was known amongst us as the Pope, and we called the girl in the Rue des Moineaux Pope Joan. We could not control our laughter; we almost choked. Whoever made me say, in a letter that someone has been pleased to attribute to me, that I have only laughed twice in my life, did not know me at that time, nor in my youth, or that idea would certainly never have entered his head.

1750-1752 In the following year (1750) when I had given up thinking about my essay I learned that it had won the prize at Dijon. The news reawakened all the ideas that it had suggested to me, endowed them with fresh vigour, and set that first leavening of heroism and virtue working in my heart that my father, my native land, and Plutarch had implanted there in my childhood. I could no longer see any greatness or beauty except in being free and virtuous, superior to fortune and man's opinion, and independent of all external circumstances. Although false shame and a fear of opprobrium prevented me at first from acting on these principles and from openly defying the conventions of my age, my mind was made up from that moment, and I only delayed the execution of my resolve until such time as contradiction provoked it and rendered it victorious.

Whilst I was philosophizing on the duties of man an event occurred which made me reflect more deeply upon my own. Thérèse became pregnant for the third time. Too sincere with myself, too proud in my heart, to be willing to belie my principles by my actions, I began to consider the fate of my children and my relationship with their mother, by reference to the laws of nature, justice, and reason, and of that religion—pure, sacred, and eternal as its Author—which men have soiled whilst pretending they were trying to purify it, and which they have turned by their formulas into no more than a religion of words, seeing that it is not costly to prescribe the impossible if you excuse yourself from performing it.

If I was mistaken in my conclusions, nothing can be more remarkable than the calm spirit in which I surrendered to them. If I were one of those low-born men, deaf to the gentle voice of Nature, a man in whose breast no real feeling of justice and humanity ever arose, this hardness of heart would have been quite easy to explain. But my warm-heartedness, my acute sensibility, the ease with which I formed

friendships, the hold they exercised over me, and the cruel wrench when they had to be broken; my innate goodwill towards my fellow men; my burning love for the great, the true, the beautiful, and the just; my horror of evil in every form, my inability to hate, to hurt, or even to wish to; that softening, that sharp and sweet emotion I feel at the sight of all that is virtuous, generous, and lovable: is it possible that all these can ever dwell in the same soul along with depravity which, quite unscrupulously, tramples the dearest of obligations underfoot? No, I feel, and boldly declare—it is impossible. Never for a moment in his life could Jean-Jacques have been a man without feelings or compassion, an unnatural father. I may have been mistaken, but I could never be callous. If I were to state my reasons, I should say too much. For since they were strong enough to seduce me, they would seduce many others; and I do not wish to expose any young people who may read me to the risk of being misled by the same error. I will be content with a general statement that in handing my children over for the State to educate, for lack of means to bring them up myself, by destining them to become workers and peasants instead of adventurers and fortune-hunters, I thought I was acting as a citizen and a father, and looked upon myself as a member of Plato's Republic. More than once since then the regret in my heart has told me that I was wrong. But far from my reason having told me the same story, I have often blessed Heaven for having thus safeguarded them from their father's fate, and from that which would have overtaken them at the moment when I should have been compelled to abandon them. If I had left them to Mme d'Épinay or to Mme de Luxembourg who, out of friendship or generosity, or from some other motive, offered to take charge of them at a later date, would they have been happier, would they have been brought up at least as honest people? I do not know; but I am sure that they would have been led to hate, and perhaps to betray, their parents. It is a hundred times better that they have never known them.

My third child, therefore was taken to the Foundling Hospital like the others, and the next two were disposed of in the same way, for I had five in all. This arrangement seemed so good and sensible and right to me that if I did not boast of it openly it was solely out of regard for their mother. But I told everyone whom I had told of our relationship; I told Diderot and Grimm. Later I informed Mme d'Épinay, and still later Mme de Luxembourg, and this freely, frankly, and under no kind of compulsion, at a time when I might easily have

concealed the matter from everybody; for Mlle Gouin was an honest woman and most discreet, and I could utterly rely upon her. The only one of my friends in whom I had some reason to confide was Thierry the doctor, who attended my poor 'aunt' in one of her confinements during which she was very ill. In a word, I made no mystery about my conduct, not only because I have never been able to conceal anything from my friends, but because I really saw nothing wrong in it. All things considered, I made the best choice for my children, or what I thought was the best. I could have wished, and still do wish, that I had been brought up and nurtured as they have been.

Whilst I made my confidences in my way, Mme Le Vasseur did the same in hers, but from far less disinterested motives. I had introduced her and her daughter to Mme Dupin, who out of friendship to me had done them many kindnesses. The mother let her into the daughter's secret. Mme Dupin is kind and generous, and Mme Le Vasseur did not tell her how carefully I provided for everything despite the modesty of my resources. She therefore made some provision herself with a liberality which Thérèse always concealed from me, on her mother's orders, all the while I was in Paris, and which she only admitted to me at the Hermitage, as a sequel to several other confessions. I did not know that Mme Dupin, who never showed the least sign of being so, was so well informed; and I do not know to this day whether her daughter-in-law, Mme de Chenonceaux, knew also. But Mme de Francueil, her stepdaughter, certainly did and could not keep quiet. She talked about it to me in the next year, when I had already left their house. This compelled me to write her a letter on the subject, which will be found in my collection. In it I reveal such of my reasons as I could give without compromising Mme Le Vasseur and her family; for the most decisive of them came from that quarter, and about those I was silent.*

I can rely on Mme Dupin's discretion and on Mme de Chenonceaux's friendship; I was also able to trust Mme de Francueil who, anyhow, died long before my secret was noised abroad. It could never have been disclosed except by those in whom I had confided, and indeed it was not until after my break with them that it became public. By that fact alone they are judged. Without wishing to disown the blame which I deserve, I would rather have that on my conscience than have to answer, like them, for sheer maliciousness. My fault is

[* Can Rousseau be suggesting that he feared the children might inherit criminal tendencies from the Le Vasseur side?]

great, but it was an error; I neglected my duties, but the desire to do harm never entered my head, and a father's feelings cannot speak very loudly for children he has never seen. But to betray a friend's confidences, to violate the most sacred of all bonds, to publish secrets entrusted to our bosom, deliberately to dishonour the friends we have deceived and who still respect us as they say good-bye – those are not faults; they are utter baseness and infamy.

I have promised to write my confessions, but not to make my apologies; so I will stop here. My duty is to tell the truth; my readers' to be just, and that is all that I shall ever ask of them.

M. de Chenonceaux's marriage made his mother's house still more pleasant to me, for his bride was very witty and accomplished. She was a most charming young person and seemed to single me out from amongst M. Dupin's secretaries. She was the only daughter of the Viscountess de Rochechouart, a great friend of the Count de Frièse, and consequently also of Grimm, who was very fond of her. It was I, however, who introduced him to her daughter; but their temperaments did not agree and their acquaintance came to nothing. Grimm, who from that time aimed at solid success, preferred the mother, who was a society woman, to the daughter, who wanted steady friends that were agreeable to her, rather than men who meddled in intrigues or tried to ingratiate themselves with the great. Mme Dupin did not find all the docility in Mme de Chenonceaux that she expected, and made the house a melancholy place for her; and Mme de Chenonceaux, priding herself on her merits and perhaps on her birth, preferred to renounce the charms of society and stay almost alone in her apartment, rather than bear a yoke which she thought unbecoming to her. This sort of exile increased my affection for her, because of the natural inclination that draws me to the unhappy. I found in her a metaphysical and thoughtful mind, sometimes a little prone to sophistry. Her conversation, which was far from being that of a young woman who has just left her convent, was most attractive to me; and yet she was still under twenty. Her skin was dazzlingly fair; her figure would have been tall and fine if she had held herself better; her hair, which was ash blonde and of uncommon beauty, reminded me of Mamma's in her prime, and sent a tremor to my heart. But the strict principles which I had just adopted and which I was resolved to adhere to at all costs, secured me from her and her charms. For a whole summer I spent three or four hours a day alone with her, solemnly teaching her arithmetic and boring her with my eternal

figures, without uttering a single compliment or throwing her an admiring glance. Five or six years later I should neither have been so wise nor so foolish; but it was decreed that I should only be in love once in my life, and that another than she should receive the first and last sighs of my heart.

Since I had been living at Mme Dupin's I had always been content with my lot, and betrayed no desire to see it improved. The increase which she had made in my salary, jointly with M. de Francueil, had come entirely of their own accord. In this year M. de Francueil, whose friendship for me increased with the days, wanted to make me a little more comfortable, and my position less precarious. He was Receiver-General of Finances. His cashier, M. Dudoyer, was old and rich, and wanted to retire. M. de Francueil offered me his place and, in order to fit myself to fill it, I went for some weeks to M. Dudoyer to receive the necessary instructions. But whether because I had little talent for such employment or because Dudoyer, who seemed to me to have his eye on someone else as his successor, did not give me honest instruction, I acquired the necessary knowledge slowly and imperfectly, and I was never able to get into my head the whole state of the accounts, which had been deliberately muddled. However, without grasping the intricacies of the subject, I did not fail to master the ordinary routine sufficiently to be able to undertake the management competently. I even took over the duties. I kept the ledgers and the cash; I paid out and took in money and gave receipts; and though I had no more liking than talent for this occupation, mature years were beginning to make me wise, and I determined to conquer my repugnance and to devote myself entirely to my duties. Unfortunately, just as I was beginning to get used to them, M. de Francueil took a short journey, during the course of which I was in charge of his cash-box, which, however, did not contain at the time more than twenty-five or thirty thousand francs. The care and disquietude which this responsibility cost me made me conscious that I was not born to be a cashier; and I have no doubt that the impatience I felt during his absence contributed to the illness that attacked me after he returned.

I have mentioned in my first part that I was almost born dead. A defect in the formation of my bladder caused me, during my early years, an almost continuous retention of urine; and my Aunt Suzon, who looked after me, had incredible difficulty in keeping me alive. She succeeded, however, and my sturdy constitution finally gained the upper hand. My health grew so much stronger during my youth

that except for the attack of languor, which I have described, and the frequent necessity of making water, which the slightest heating of the blood always rendered an uncomfortable duty, I reached the age of thirty almost without feeling my early infirmity at all. The first touch of it I had was on my arrival in Venice. The fatigue of the journey and the terrible heat I had endured raised the temperature of my urine and gave me pains in the kidneys, which did not leave me till winter set in. After my visit to the *padoana*, I felt that I was a dead man but did not suffer the least discomfort. After I had exhausted myself, more in imagination than in fact, over my Giulietta, I felt in better health than ever. It was not until after Diderot's imprisonment that the overheating caused by my walks to Vincennes during the terrible heat gave me a violent kidney attack; and since that time I have never recovered my former health.

At the moment I am speaking of, having perhaps somewhat tired myself by my wretched work at that confounded office, I became worse than ever before and lay in bed for five or six weeks in the saddest imaginable condition. Mme Dupin sent me the famous Morand, who for all his cleverness and delicacy of touch gave me incredible pain and never succeeded in probing me. He advised me to go to Daran, who succeeded in introducing his catheters which were more flexible; but in reporting my state to Mme Dupin, Morand declared that I should be dead within six months. This statement, which came round to me, made me reflect seriously on my condition, and on the foolishness of sacrificing the pleasure and tranquillity of the few days still remaining to me, to the slavery of an employment for which I felt nothing but disgust. Besides, how could I reconcile the strict principles I had recently adopted with a state so foreign to them? Would it be pardonable in me to preach disinterestedness and poverty when I was cashier to the Receiver-General of Finance? These thoughts and my fever worked with such effect on my mind, and together formed so powerful a combination that nothing since then has been able to eradicate them; and during my convalescence I coolly confirmed the resolutions I had taken in my delirium. I renounced for ever all plans for fortune and advancement. I determined to spend the little time I had still to live in independence and poverty, and put all the strength of my soul into breaking the fetters of prejudice, courageously doing what seemed to me right, without in the least worrying what men might think. The obstacles I had to contend with and the efforts I made in overcoming them were quite incredible. I succeeded

in so far as it was possible, and to a greater extent than I had myself expected. If I had shaken off the yoke of friendship as well as that of public opinion, I should have accomplished my purpose, the greatest perhaps, or at least the most serviceable to virtue ever conceived by mortal man. But whilst I was trampling underfoot the senseless opinions of the vulgar herd of so-called great and so-called wise, I allowed myself to be enslaved and led like a child by so-called friends, who were jealous at seeing me strike out alone down a new road and, whilst appearing to be much concerned for my happiness, in fact used every endeavour to make me look ridiculous, and began by striving to disgrace me so that afterwards they could succeed in robbing me of my reputation. It was not so much my literary celebrity as the change in my character, which dates from this time, that evoked their jealousy; they would perhaps have forgiven me for brilliance in the art of writing; but they could not forgive me for setting up an example by my conduct; this appeared to put them out. I was born for friendship; my easy and gentle disposition had no difficulty in fostering it. So long as I lived unknown to the public, I was loved by all who knew me, and had not a single enemy. But as soon as I had a name I ceased to have friends. That was a very great misfortune. A still greater one was that I was surrounded by people who took the name of friend, and used the rights it gave them only to drag me to my undoing. The continuation of these memoirs will reveal their odious intrigues; here I merely show their origin; soon we shall see the first link forged.

In the independent state in which I wished to live it was necessary, however, to have a means of livelihood. I thought of a very simple one, copying music at so much a page. If some more solid occupation would have fulfilled the same end I should have adopted it; but having both taste and ability for this, and it being the sole employment that would earn me my daily bread without personal dependence, I took to it. Believing that I had no more need to look ahead, and silencing the voice of vanity, from cashier to a financier I turned music copyist. I thought that I had gained a great deal by this choice; and so little have I repented of it that I have never abandoned this occupation except under compulsion, only to take it up again as soon as I was able.

The success of my first essay made it easier for me to carry out this plan. When it had won the prize Diderot undertook to get it printed; and whilst I was in bed he wrote me a note to inform me of its publication and reception. 'It is taking on like wildfire,' he announced.

'There has never been a success like it.' The public's kindness to an unknown author, which had not been intrigued for, gave me my first real assurance of my talents about which, despite my inner conviction, I had always been doubtful till then. I realized what an advantage I could derive from them for the way of life I was about to adopt, and concluded that a copyist with some literary fame would, in all probability, not lack work.

As soon as my resolution was actually taken and confirmed I wrote a note to M. de Francueil to inform him of it, to thank him and Mme Dupin for all their kindnesses and to ask for their custom. Francueil did not understand a word of this note and, thinking that I was still delirious, hurried to my room. But he found me so firm in my resolution that he could not shake it. So he went and told Mme Dupin and the rest of the world that I had gone mad. I let them talk and went on my way. I began my reformation with my dress; I gave up gold lace and white stockings, and wore a round wig. I gave up my sword and sold my watch, saying to myself with unbelievable delight: 'Heaven be praised, I shall not need to know the time any more.' M. de Francueil was kind enough to wait for some days before disposing of his cashier's place. Finally, when he saw that my mind was made up he gave the post to M. d'Alibard, formerly young Chenonceaux's tutor, and known among botanists for his *Flora Parisiniensis*.*

In spite of the severity of my reform in expenditure, I did not extend it at first to my linen, which was good in quality and quantity, being the remains of my Venice outfit, of which I was particularly fond. I had attached such importance to its cleanliness that it had become a matter of luxury and a continuous source of expense to me. Someone did me the favour of delivering me from this servitude. On Christmas Eve, whilst Thérèse and Mme Le Vasseur were at Vespers and I was at a concert of sacred music, the door of a garret where all our linen was spread out after a recent wash was forced open, and everything was stolen, including forty-two very fine linen shirts of mine, which made the principal part of my stock. From the neighbours' description of a man seen leaving the hotel at that hour, carrying some bundles, Thérèse and I suspected her brother, who was known to be a very bad character. Her mother indignantly rejected our suspicions;

*I have no doubt that M. de Francueil and his friends now give a very different account of all this. But I would refer to what he said to people at the time and for a long while afterwards up to the hatching of the plot. This will be remembered, no doubt, by men of honesty and good sense.

but there was so much evidence to confirm them that I continued to harbour them nevertheless. I did not dare to make stricter inquiries, for fear of discovering more than I wished to. This brother of hers never appeared at my rooms again, and finally disappeared altogether. I deplored Thérèse's fate, and my own for being connected with so mixed a family, and urged her more strongly than ever to shake off their dangerous yoke. This incident cured me of my taste for fine linen, and I have only worn the most common kind since, which is more in keeping with the rest of my dress.

Having thus completed my reforms, my only thought was to make them solid and lasting by striving to uproot from my heart all tendencies to be affected by the judgement of men, and everything that might deflect me, out of fear of reproach, from conduct that was good and reasonable in itself. Thanks to the stir created by my work, my resolution made some stir too and brought me customers; so I began my new trade with some success. Several things, however, prevented my doing as well as I might have done under other circumstances. In the first place, my poor physical condition. My recent attack had after-effects which prevented my ever recovering my former state of health. I think that the doctors in whose hands I put myself did me as much harm as my illness. I consulted Morand, Daran, Helvétius, Malouin, and Thierry, one after the other. They were all very learned men, and all my friends, and each treated me in his own way. But they did not give me any relief, and weakened me considerably. The more closely I followed their directions, the sallower, thinner, and weaker I became. They alarmed me and, gauging my state by the effect of their drugs, my imagination envisaged only a succession of sufferings – retention of urine, gravel, and stone – concluding with my death. Everything that relieves others – decoctions, baths, and bleeding – merely increased my distress. Finding that Daran's catheters – the only thing that had any effect and without which I thought I could not live – afforded me no more than momentary relief, I proceeded, at great expense, to lay in a huge stock of them, so that I should have enough for the rest of my life, in case anything should happen to Daran. Including the number still in hand I must have bought fifty *louis*' worth during the eight or ten years in which I made such frequent use of them. It will be clear that so costly, painful, and troublesome a treatment did not allow me to work without distractions, also that a dying man does not put any great ardour into earning his daily bread.

My literary occupations were another distraction no less prejudicial to my daily employment. The moment my essay appeared the champions of literature fell upon me as if of one accord. Annoyed at seeing so many M. Josses* who did not even understand what it was about but attempted to lay down the law, I took up my pen and gave one or two of them such a dressing down that they certainly were not left with the laugh on their side. A certain M. Gautier of Nancy, the first to fall under my pen, was rudely mishandled in a letter to M. Grimm. The second was none less than King Stanislas, who was not too proud to enter the lists against me. This honour from him caused me to change my tone in writing my reply. I adopted a more serious but no less positive style and, without failing in respect for the author, completely refuted his work, in which, as I knew, a Jesuit by the name of Father de Menou† had had a hand. I relied on my perspicuity to disentangle the prince's share from the priest's and, mercilessly falling on all the Jesuitical phrases, lighted by the way on an anachronism that I thought could come from no one but his Reverence. This piece, which for some reason that I do not understand has attracted less attention than any of my other writings, is up to the present a work unique of its kind. I seized the opportunity offered to show the public how a private citizen could defend the cause of truth even against a sovereign. It would be hard to strike a note at the same time bolder and more respectful than the one which I adopted in my reply to him. I was fortunate enough to be dealing with an adversary for whom I felt sincere respect, which I could express without slavish adulation; and this I did with considerable success, but nevertheless in a dignified way. My friends grew alarmed on my behalf, and imagined me already in the Bastille. I did not fear that for a single moment, and I was right.

After he had read my reply the good prince exclaimed: 'That is enough for me. I have finished with the business.' Since then I have received various marks of esteem and kindnesses from him, some of which I shall mention later; and my answer circulated quietly through France and the rest of Europe without anyone finding anything to criticize in it.

A little time afterwards I had another unexpected opponent, the same M. Bordes of Lyons who had shown me such friendship and

[* M. Josse in Molière's *L'Amour médecin*, who had a habit of strongly recommending various things in which he had a commercial interest.]

[† Actually Joseph de Menoux, King Stanislas's chaplain.]

done me so many kindnesses ten years before. I had not forgotten him, but had neglected him out of laziness, and had not sent him my writings through lack of any ready-made way to get them to him. I was therefore in the wrong; and he attacked me, though courteously. I replied in the same vein. He then made a more decided rejoinder, which occasioned my last answer, after which he was silent. But he became my most bitter enemy, and chose the moment of my misfortunes to write most dreadful libels about me. He even took a journey to London in order to injure me there.

All this controversy occupied much of my time, which I should have spent in copying, and contributed little to the cause of truth or to the profit of my purse. Pissot, who was my publisher at the time, gave me very little for my pamphlets, often nothing at all. I did not receive a farthing, for example, from my first essay; Diderot gave it to him for nothing. I had to wait a long time for the little he paid me, and to extract it from him *sou by sou*. In the meantime my copying made no progress. I was practising two trades, a sure means of failing in both.

They were contradictory in another sense as well, for each demanded of me a different way of life. The success of my first writings had made me fashionable. The position I had taken up excited curiosity. People wanted to meet this odd man who sought no acquaintances and only wanted to pursue his freedom and happiness in his own way – which was enough to make it impossible for him to do so. My room was never empty of people who came on various excuses to take up my time. The ladies employed countless ruses to get me to dine with them. The ruder I was to people the more they persisted. I could not refuse everybody. Whilst I made hundreds of enemies by my refusals I was incessantly a slave to my own good nature; and in whatever way I set about it I never had an hour a day to myself.

I discovered then that it is not always as easy as one imagines to be poor and independent. I wanted to live by my trade, and the public did not intend me to. They invented thousands of little ways of compensating me for my time that they wasted. The next thing would have been to show myself like Punch, at so much a head. I do not know any slavery more degrading and cruel than that. I could see no remedy except to refuse all presents, great and small, and to make no exceptions for anybody. All this merely attracted more donors anxious to have the glory of overcoming my resistance, and of forcing me into a state of obligation against my will. Many who would never have given me a

crown if I had asked for it never ceased to pester me with their offers and, to avenge themselves for their rejection, accused me of refusing out of arrogance and ostentation.

It will be obvious that the course I had taken and the system I wished to follow were not to the taste of Mme Le Vasseur. All her daughter's disinterestedness did not prevent her following her mother's instructions; and my *bosses*, as Gauffecourt called them, were not always as firm as I in their refusals. Although much was concealed from me I saw enough to conclude that I did not see everything; and this tortured me, not so much on account of the charge of connivance which I could easily foresee, as by the cruel thought that I could never be master of my own establishment, or even of myself. I begged and implored and grew angry, but all to no effect. The mamma made me out an eternal grumbler, an absolute boor. There were continual whisperings with my friends; everything was a secret and a mystery to me in my own house, and in order to protect myself from ceaseless storms I no longer dared to inquire what went on. To deliver myself from all these vexations, I should have needed a firmness of which I was incapable. I knew how to complain but not to act; they let me talk and went their own way.

These continual wranglings and the daily disagreeableness to which I was subjected made my apartment and residence in Paris unpleasant to me. When my ailments allowed me to go out, and when I was not dragged hither and thither by my acquaintances, I went for solitary walks, during which I reflected on my great system and jotted down some relevant ideas, with the aid of a pocket-book and a pencil which I always carried. In this way the unforeseen disadvantages of the condition I had chosen for myself plunged me entirely into literature as a way of escape; and that is why all my early works reveal the bitterness and ill-humour that drove me to them.

Another thing contributed to them also. Precipitated against my will into the world without possessing its manners, and in no state to learn them or conform to them, I decided to adopt manners of my own which would excuse me from the necessity. Since my foolish and tiresome silence, which I could not overcome, arose from my fear of making social blunders I elected, in order to give myself courage, to trample all courtesies underfoot. I became cynical and sarcastic out of awkwardness, and affected to despise the manners I did not know how to practise. It is true that, to harmonize this rudeness with my new principles, I ennobled it in my mind until it assumed the shape of

dauntless virtue; and it is because of this exalted basis, I venture to assert, that it persisted more strongly and for a longer time than might have been expected of a behaviour so contrary to my nature. However, despite the misanthropic reputation which my appearance and a few happy phrases gained for me in the world, in private I always sustained the part badly. Certainly my friends and acquaintances led this unsociable bear around like a lamb. I limited my sarcasms to unwelcome but general truths, and never could say an unkind word to anybody.

*The Village Soothsayer** brought me completely into fashion, and soon no man in all Paris was more sought after than I. The story of this play, which marks an epoch in my life, is mixed up with that of the relationships I had at the time, about which I must enter into some details in order to throw light on what follows.

I had a considerable number of acquaintances but only two chosen friends, Diderot and Grimm. Owing to the desire I always feel to bring those who are dear to me together I was so much the friend of both that they could not help striking up a friendship themselves. I brought them together; they got along well and were soon more intimate with one another than with me. Diderot had innumerable acquaintances; but Grimm, being a foreigner and a newcomer, had as yet few, and I was delighted to procure him all I could. I had introduced him to Diderot. I introduced him to Gauffecourt. I took him to Mme Chenonceaux, to Mme d'Épinay, and to Baron d'Holbach, with whom I found myself on terms almost against my will. All my friends became his. That was quite simple. But none of his became mine, and this was not so easy to understand. Whilst he lived with the Count de Frièse, he often invited us to dine with him; but I never received any tokens of friendship or good-will from the Count himself or from his relative the Count de Schomberg, who was very friendly with Grimm, or from any other person, male or female, with whom Grimm was on terms through them. The sole exception was the Abbé Raynal who, although his friend, proved also mine, and on one occasion offered me his purse with most uncommon generosity. But I had known the Abbé Raynal before Grimm knew him, and I had always been fond of him ever since his delicate and honourable behaviour to me on a very trivial occasion, but one which I never forgot.

The Abbé Raynal was certainly a warm friend, and gave me proof

* *Le Devin du village.*

of it at about the time I am speaking of, in a matter concerning Grimm, with whom he was extremely intimate. After having been on very friendly terms for some time with Mlle Fel, Grimm suddenly took it into his head to fall madly in love with her and to try and supplant Cahusac. The lady, who prided herself on her constancy, dismissed her new wooer, who took the affair tragically and decided that it would be the death of him. Suddenly he fell into the strangest illness ever heard of in all the world. He spent his days and his nights in a continuous lethargy, with his eyes wide open and his pulse beating normally, but never speaking or eating or moving, sometimes appearing to understand but never replying, even by signs. For the rest he was free from tremor, pain, or fever, but lay there as if he were dead. The Abbé Raynal and I took it in turns to watch him. The Abbé, being sturdier and in better health, spent the nights with him, and I spent the days. He was never alone. One of us would not leave till the other came. The Count de Frièse was alarmed and brought Senac, who examined him thoroughly, said it would be nothing, and did not even prescribe for him. My concern for my friend made me look carefully into the doctor's face, and I saw him smile as he went out. The sick man, however, lay motionless for several days and took no broth or anything else except some preserved cherries, which I put on his tongue from time to time and which he swallowed without difficulty. One fine morning he got up, dressed himself, and resumed his ordinary life, without ever saying anything either to me or, as far as I know, to the Abbé or anyone else about his singular lethargy, or about the way we had looked after him all the time it had lasted.

This incident did not fail to make a stir, and it really would have been a marvellous story if an opera girl's hard-heartedness had caused a man to die of despair. This magnificent passion made Grimm fashionable; soon he was considered a prodigy of love, friendship, and devotion of every sort. This reputation caused him to be sought after and fêted in high society, and so took him far from me, who had never been anything but a makeshift. I saw that he was on the point of deserting me altogether, which much distressed me, for all the strong feelings of which he made such a show were those that in a quieter way I felt for him. I was glad that he had succeeded in the world, but could have wished that his success did not involve his forgetting his friend. 'Grimm,' I said to him one day, 'you are neglecting me, but I forgive you. When the first intoxication of your riotous success has worn off and you feel its hollowness, I hope that you will come

back to me. You will find me the same. But for the present do not worry. I leave you free and I will wait for you.' He accepted what I said, acted as I had suggested, and went his own way so completely that I never saw him again except in the company of our common friends.

Our chief meeting-place, before he became as intimate with Mme d'Épinay as he subsequently did, was at Baron d'Holbach's.* The said baron was the son of a self-made man, and enjoyed a considerable fortune of which he made noble use. He entertained men of letters and attainments at his house, and by his own knowledge and accomplishments was able to hold his own amongst them. Having been intimate for a long time with Diderot, he had sought me out through him even before my name was well known. A natural repugnance kept me for some time from responding to his advances. One day he asked me the reason, and I answered: 'You are too rich.' He persisted, and finally had his way. My greatest misfortune has been my inability to resist flattery; I have always had cause to be sorry when I have given in to it.

Another acquaintance, which turned into a friendship as soon as I had a right to claim it, was that with M. Duclos. I had met him for the first time several years before at La Chevrette, at the house of Mme d'Épinay, with whom he was on good terms. We merely dined together, and he left the same day; but we chatted for a few minutes after dinner. Mme d'Épinay had spoken to him about me and my opera *The Gallant Muses*. Duclos, who had too much talent himself not to value other talented men, was predisposed in my favour and invited me to visit him. Notwithstanding my original liking for him, which was strengthened on acquaintance, my shyness and sluggishness held me back for so long as I had no passport to him except his kindness; but encouraged by my first success and his praises, which came round to me, I called upon him. He returned my visit, and so began a relationship between us which will always cause me to hold him dear, and which, reinforcing the evidence of my own heart, has convinced me that uprightness and honour may sometimes be combined with the pursuit of letters.

Many other less solid relationships, which I will not mention here followed as a consequence of my first successes, and lasted until curiosity was satisfied. I was a man so quickly understood that there was nothing more to be learnt about me on a second day. One

[* A rich naturalized German (1723-89).]

woman, however, who sought me out at that time held on more persistently than all the rest. This was the Marchioness de Créqui, niece of the Bailli de Froulay, the Maltese ambassador, whose brother had been M. de Montaignu's predecessor in the Venice embassy, whom I had gone to see on my return from that city. Mme de Créqui wrote to me; I went to her house, and she took me as a friend. I dined there sometimes, and met several men of letters, among others M. Saurin, the author of *Spartacus*, *Barnevelt*, and other plays, who has since become my most bitter enemy, for no other reason that I can imagine except that I bear the name of a man whom his father most disgracefully persecuted.

Clearly, for a copyist who should have been working at his trade from morning till night, I had many distractions which prevented my day from being very lucrative, and prevented my paying sufficient attention to the work I did to do it well. So I lost more than half the time I had left in rubbing or scratching out my mistakes, or beginning again on a fresh sheet. These tiresome interruptions made Paris more unbearable to me every day, and caused me to look eagerly for opportunities of going into the country. Several times I went to spend a few days at Marcoussis, where Mme Le Vasseur knew the priest, in whose house we so arranged ourselves that he was not inconvenienced. On one occasion Grimm came with us.* The priest had a voice and sang well, and though he had no knowledge of music he could learn his part with ease and accuracy. We passed the time singing the trios I had composed at Chenonceaux; and here I wrote two or three new ones to words that Grimm and the priest put together in a rough and ready way. I cannot help regretting those trios composed and sung in moments of real and pure joy. I left them at Wootton with all my music, and Miss Davenport has no doubt already used them as curl-papers. But they deserved to be kept and were mostly very good in their counterpoint. It was after one of these little trips, on which I had been delighted to see 'aunt' at her ease and in high spirits, and on which I had been in high spirits too, that I wrote the priest a letter in verse, very hastily and badly botched together, which will be found among my papers.

* Since I have omitted to relate a trifling but memorable adventure which I had with the aforesaid M. Grimm one morning when we were to dine at the spring at Saint-Vandrelle, I will let it pass; but on thinking it over subsequently, I have come to the conclusion that even then he was hatching in his inmost heart the plot that he afterwards carried out with such prodigious success.

Nearer Paris, I had another refuge that was much to my taste, as the guest of M. Mussard, my compatriot, relative, and friend, who had built himself a charming retreat near Passy, where I have spent some very peaceful hours. M. Mussard was a jeweller, a sensible man who, after making an honest fortune in his business and marrying his only daughter to M. de Valmalette, the son of an exchange-broker and chamberlain to the King, had taken the wise course of retiring from his trade and business in his old age, and placing an interval of rest and enjoyment between the bustle of life and his death. This good Mussard, a real practising philosopher, lived without a care in a very pleasant house that he had built for himself, and a very pretty garden which he had planted with his own hands. In digging over the terraces of this garden he found fossil shells, and in such quantities that his lively imagination could see nothing but shells in the whole of Nature and finally came to believe that the Universe consisted only of shells and the remains of shells, and that the whole earth was merely powdered shell. With no other thought in his head but his singular discoveries, he got so excited about his ideas on the subject that they would finally have turned into a system in his head – that is to say into a mania – had not death, fortunately for his reason but unfortunately for his friends, who were fond of him and found his house the most delightful refuge, come and taken him from them by the strangest and cruellest disease. This was a malignant tumour of the stomach which had prevented his eating for some time before the reason was discovered, and which finally killed him, after several years of great pain, by sheer starvation. I cannot remember the last days of this unfortunate and worthy man without a pang at the heart. He still gave a hearty welcome to Lenieps and myself, the only friends whom the sight of his sufferings did not drive away from him until his last hour. But he was reduced, I say, to feasting his eyes on the meals he had served for us whilst scarcely himself able to swallow a few drops of very weak tea, which he would bring up the next moment. Before the time of his illness how many pleasant hours I spent at his house with the picked friends he had made! First among them I rank the Abbé Prévost, a very charming and simple man, whose books were inspired by his heart and deserve immortality. Nothing about his nature or his company displayed that sombre colouring which he gave to his works. Then there was Doctor Procope, an ugly little man but a great success with the ladies; there was Boulanger, the famous author of the posthumous *Oriental Despotism*, who I believe developed Mussard's theories about

the age of the world. Among the women there was Mme Denis, Voltaire's niece, who was then a simple person and made no pretensions to wit; Mme Vanloo, certainly no beauty but a charming person who sang like an angel; and Mme de Valmalette herself, who also sang and who, extremely thin though she was, would have been most attractive if she had not set out so earnestly to be so. Such was more or less the company M. Mussard kept, and I should have enjoyed it very much had I not enjoyed his conchyliomania in private even better. Indeed, I can say that for six months or more I worked in his study with as much pleasure as he did.

He had insisted for a long time that the Passy waters would be good for my health, and implored me to stay in his house and drink them. To get away from the urban crowds for a while I finally accepted, and went to spend eight or ten days at Passy, which did me good, though rather because I was staying in the country than by virtue of the waters. Mussard played the violoncello, and was a passionate lover of Italian music. One evening we had a long talk on that subject before going to bed, and particularly discussed the comic operas we had both seen in Italy, and which had delighted us both.

That night, being unable to sleep, I began to consider how it would be possible to give an idea of this kind of drama in France; for *The Loves of Ragonde** did not resemble it in any way. In the morning, whilst strolling and taking the waters, I made up a few hasty samples of verses, and fitted tunes to them that came back to me as I did so. I scribbled all this down in a kind of vaulted summer-house at the end of the garden, and over tea I could not help showing these airs to M. Mussard and his housekeeper, Mlle Duvernois, who was a very nice and amiable young woman. The three pieces I had sketched out were the first monologue, 'I have lost my serving-man'; the soothsayer's song, 'Love grows by its own disquiet'; and the final duet, 'I hold you, Colin, to your vows.' So little did I imagine that this was worth the trouble of continuing that, had it not been for the applause and encouragement of those two, I should have thrown my scraps of paper on the fire and not given them another thought, as I have done so many times to other things at least as good. But they so inspired me that within six days my text was written, except for a few verses, and all my music sketched out. So all that I had left to do in Paris was a few recitatives and all the connecting parts; and I completed the

* *Les Amours de Ragonde*, a masked comedy with words by Destouches and music by Mouret.

whole thing with such speed that in three weeks my scenes were copied out and ready to be performed. All that was lacking was the interlude, which was not written till long afterwards.

1752 The composition of this work so excited me that I longed passionately to hear it; and I would have given anything to see it performed after my own ideas behind closed doors, as Lulli is said to have had his *Armide* played for him alone on one occasion. As it was not possible for me to have this pleasure except at a public performance, it was absolutely necessary, if my piece was to be played, to get it accepted at the Opera. Unfortunately it was in an absolutely new style, to which people's ears were unaccustomed. Furthermore, the failure of *The Gallant Muses* made me expect a similar fate for the *Soothsayer* if I submitted it under my own name. Duclos helped me out of my difficulty and undertook to get the work tried over without revealing who the author was. So as not to betray myself I did not attend this rehearsal; and the 'Little Violins'* who conducted it did not themselves know who the author was until the work's excellence had been confirmed by general applause. Everyone who heard it was delighted with it, so much so that next day there was no other subject of conversation in any company. M. de Cury, Master of the King's Entertainments, who had been present at the rehearsal, asked for the work so that it could be performed at Court. Duclos knew my intentions, and considered that I would have less control over my piece at Court than in Paris. He therefore refused. Cury demanded it by virtue of his office, but Duclos did not give in, and the dispute became so lively that on one occasion they would have walked out of the Opera to fight a duel if they had not been separated. Cury tried to approach me, but I left the decision in M. Duclos's hands. So he had to go back to him. The Duke d'Aumont interfered, and Duclos finally saw fit to yield to authority. He handed the piece over, therefore, to be played at Fontainebleau.

The part to which I had paid the greatest attention, and in which I had made the greatest departure from the beaten track, was the recitative. Mine was stressed in an entirely new way and timed to the speaking of the words. But they would not let this horrible innovation

[* This was the nickname of Rebel and Francœur, who had become well known in their youth from their habit of going out together to play the violin in various houses.]

stand; they were afraid that it would shock the ears of the timid herd. I gave my permission for a fresh recitative to be written by Francueil and Jelyotte, but I refused to have anything to do with it myself.

When all was ready and the date fixed for the performance, it was suggested that I should go down to Fontainebleau, at least to see the last rehearsal. I went with Mlle Fel, Grimm, and, I think, the Abbé Raynal, in one of the royal carriages. The rehearsal was not too bad; and I was better pleased with it than I had expected. The orchestra was large, being made up of the Opera players and the royal band. Jelyotte sang Colin; Mlle Fel, Colette; and Cuvilier, the Soothsayer; the Opera singers were the chorus. I said very little. Jelyotte had made all the arrangements and I did not want to interfere with what he had done; but in spite of my impassive air I was as shy as a schoolboy among all those people.

The day after the performance I went to breakfast at the Café du Grand-Commun, where there were a great number of people, talking about the last evening's rehearsal, and the difficulty there had been in getting in. One officer who was there said that he had had no trouble and gave a long account of the evening. He described the author and reported what he had done and said. But what astounded me about this long tale, told with equal assurance and directness, was that there was not a word of truth in it. It was perfectly clear to me that this fellow who spoke so knowledgeably about the rehearsal had not been there. For there before his eyes was the author he pretended to have observed so carefully, and he did not recognize him. But what was still more singular about this incident was its effect on me. This man was getting on in years; there was nothing of the fop or the braggart about his looks or his speech; his features proclaimed him a man of attainments; his Cross of St Louis showed him to be an officer in retirement. Despite his effrontery, and in spite of myself, I felt a liking for him; and as he retailed his lies I blushed and looked down. I was sitting upon thorns. Sometimes I asked myself whether it was not possible to suppose that he was merely mistaken, and really believed what he said. Finally, trembling with fear that someone might recognize me and put him to shame, I hastily finished my chocolate in silence and left the place at the earliest possible moment, lowering my head as I passed in front of him, just as his audience was beginning to comment on his tale. In the street I noticed that I was in a perspiration; and I am sure that if anyone had recognized me and called my name while I was inside, I should have displayed all the shame and

confusion of a guilty man, simply from what I felt that poor man would suffer if his lies were detected.

Here I am once more at one of those critical moments in my life in which it is difficult to confine myself to a narrative because it is almost impossible that even the narrative will not carry some hint of censure or apology. I will try, however, to convey how and with what motives I acted, without adding any praise or blame.

On that day I was dressed in my usual careless style, with a rough beard and an ill-combed wig. Considering my unkempt state an act of courage, I entered the theatre where the King, the Queen, the Royal Family, and the whole Court were shortly due to arrive. I then went and took my seat in the box to which M. Cury conducted me, which was his own; it was a large stage-box opposite a smaller and higher one where the King sat with Mme de Pompadour. Surrounded by ladies and being the only man in the front of the box, I could not doubt that I had been placed there purposely to be seen. When the theatre was lighted up, and I saw myself dressed like that in the middle of such an overdressed crowd, I began to feel ill at ease. I asked myself whether I was in my right place, and whether I was suitably attired, and after some uncomfortable minutes I answered 'Yes' with a boldness which, perhaps, proceeded rather from the impossibility of drawing back than from the strength of my conviction. 'I am in my proper place', I told myself, 'since I have come to see my piece performed, and since I have been invited, and since I only wrote it for this purpose, and since no one can possibly have a better right than I to enjoy the fruit of my work and my talents. I am dressed in my ordinary way, neither better nor worse. If I begin to pander to opinion over one matter, I shall pretty soon be doing so over everything. To be consistent with myself, I must not blush, wherever I may be, at being dressed according to the position in life I have chosen. My outward appearance is simple and careless, but not dirty or slovenly. Nor is a beard so in itself, since it is a gift of Nature and, depending on the time and the fashion, is sometimes considered an ornament. I shall be considered ridiculous, offensive. Well, what is that to me? I must know how to bear ridicule and censure, provided they are undeserved. After this little soliloquy I felt so fortified that I should have behaved with boldness if that had been necessary. But, whether because of the Master's presence or of the natural kindness of his courtiers, I saw nothing uncivil or ill-bred about the curiosity of which I was the object. This so affected me that I began to be uneasy once

more about myself and the reception of my play. I was afraid that I might disappoint these people who seemed so predisposed in my favour and so anxious to applaud. I was armed against jeering; but their unexpected attitude of kindness so overcame me that I trembled like a child when the thing began.

I had soon reason to feel reassured. The piece was very badly acted, but the singing was good and the music well played. From the first scene, which is really touching in its simplicity, I heard a murmur of surprise and applause, hitherto unknown at plays of this sort, rising from the boxes. The mounting excitement soon reached such a pitch that it was noticeable right through the audience and, to use an expression of Montesquieu's, began to increase its effect by its effect. There is no clapping when the King is present; for that reason every note was heard, to the great advantage of the piece and its author. Around me I heard a whispering of women who seemed to me as lovely as angels, and who said to one another under their breath: 'That is charming. That is delightful. There is not a note that does not speak straight to the heart.' The pleasure of affecting so many pleasant people moved even me to tears, which I could not restrain during the first duet, when I noticed that I was not the only one who wept. I was thrown back on myself for a moment when I remembered M. de Treytorens's concert. This recollection made me feel like the slave who held the crown over the head of the Roman general in the triumph. But it was short and I soon surrendered myself, completely and unreservedly, to the pleasure of savouring my glory. And yet I am sure that sexual passion counted for more at that moment than the vanity of an author; if there had only been men present I am positive that I should not have been devoured, as I continuously was, by the desire to catch with my lips the delicious tears I had evoked. I have seen plays excite more lively transports of admiration, but I have never known so complete, so sweet, and so touching an enthusiasm pervade a whole theatre, especially at a first performance before the Court. Anyone who was present should remember it, for the effect was unique.

That same evening the Duke d'Aumont sent me word to present myself at the Château next day at eleven. M. Cury, who brought the message, added that it was believed I was to receive a pension, which the King would announce to me himself.

Would anyone believe that the night following so brilliant a day was a night of anguish and perplexity to me? My first thought, after that of the presentation, was of my frequent need to retire which had

caused me much suffering on that evening in the theatre, and which might afflict me next day when I was in the gallery or the King's apartment, among all those great people, waiting for His Majesty to pass. This ailment was the principal cause that kept me away from society and prevented me from staying in a room with ladies when the doors were closed. The mere thought of the situation into which my need might put me was capable of producing such an attack of it that I would either faint or make a scene – and I would rather have died than that. Only people who know this state can understand my horror of running the risk of it.

I pictured myself next in the King's presence and presented to His Majesty, who condescended to stop and speak to me. To answer would require judgement and presence of mind. Would my confounded shyness, which afflicts me in the company of the least stranger, have left me in the presence of the King of France, or would it have allowed me to choose the proper answers on the spur of the moment? I wished, without abandoning the severe air and tone I had adopted, to show myself sensible of the honour paid me by so great a monarch. It was necessary to clothe some great and useful truth in the form of a choice and well-deserved eulogy. If I were to prepare a timely answer beforehand I should have to foresee exactly what he might say to me; even then, when in his presence, I certainly should not remember a single word of what I had thought out. What would become of me at that moment, beneath the eyes of the whole Court, if in my confusion one of my usual inanities were to escape my lips? This danger alarmed me, terrified me, and made me tremble so violently that I decided, come what might, not to expose myself to it.

I was losing, it is true, the pension which had been, in a way, offered to me; but at the same time I was freeing myself from the dependence it would have imposed upon me. Farewell truth, liberty, and courage! How should I be able ever to speak again of independence and disinterestedness? So long as I took that pension I should have to flatter or be silent. Besides, what assurance had I that it would be paid? What steps should I have to take to obtain it? How many people should I have to petition? It would cost me more trouble, and far more unpleasant trouble, to keep it than to do without it. I concluded, therefore, that by refusing it I was taking an action highly consonant with my principles and was sacrificing the illusion for the reality. I told Grimm my decision and he said nothing against it. To the rest I made the excuse of my health, and left that same morning.

My departure created some stir, and was generally criticized. My reasons could not be understood by the world at large: it was far easier to accuse me of a stupid pride, and this more easily satisfied the jealousy of such as felt in their hearts that they would not have acted in the same way. The next day Jelyotte wrote me a note, giving me an account of my play's success, and of the great fancy the King himself had taken for it. 'All day long', he informed me, 'His Majesty cannot stop singing in the vilest voice in his whole Kingdom: "I have lost my serving man; all my joy has gone from me."' He added that in a fortnight's time there was to be a second performance of the *Soothsayer* which would confirm in the eyes of the whole public the complete success of the first.

Two days later, at nine in the evening, just as I was going into Mme d'Épinay's door to take supper with her, a coach passed me and someone inside beckoned me to get in. I did so, and it was Diderot, who spoke to me about that pension with a warmth that I should not have expected of a philosopher on such a subject. He did not consider that I had committed an offence in refusing to be presented to the King, but he regarded my indifference towards the pension as a crime. I might be disinterested on my own account, he told me, but I had no right to be so on behalf of Mme Le Vasseur and her daughter. I owed it to them, he said, to neglect no possible honest means of providing for their subsistence. But as I could not be said after all to have refused the pension, and since they had apparently been disposed to offer it to me, he held I ought to petition for it, and obtain it at whatever cost. Although I was touched by his anxiety I could not appreciate his principles, and we had a very lively argument on the point, the first I ever had with him. We never had any subsequent dispute that did not follow this pattern, he laying down what he considered I ought to do and I defending myself because I thought differently.

It was late before we parted. I wanted to take him in to supper with Mme d'Épinay, but he declined; and whatever efforts I made at one time or another to persuade him to meet her, out of my usual desire to bring the people I love together – I even went so far as to bring her to his door, which he kept resolutely shut – he always refused my suggestions, and never spoke of her except in the most slighting terms. It was not till after my quarrel with her and with him that they came together and he began to speak of her with respect.

From that time Diderot and Grimm seemed to make it their business to set the *bosses* against me by informing them that if they were

not more comfortably off it was all my fault, and that they would never get anything through me. Those two gentlemen tried to persuade them to leave me, in fact, by promising to get them a salt licence, a tobacco shop, and I do not know what else through Mme d'Épinay's influence. They tried to drag d'Holbach and even Duclos into alliance with them; but the latter always refused. I had some idea of all their intrigues at the time; but I did not learn the exact details until long afterwards. I have often had reason to deplore the blind and clumsy zeal of my friends who, when endeavouring to consign me, in my sick state, to the most melancholy solitude, always imagined that they were working for my happiness, though the means they employed were those best calculated to make me miserable.

1753 During the following carnival, of 1753, the *Soothsayer* was played in Paris, and I had an opportunity, in the meantime, to write the overture and interlude. This interlude, in its printed form, ought to have been played as one continuous action on a single subject, for, in my opinion, it contained some very pleasant tableaux. But when I proposed this idea at the Opera, not only did they not listen to me, but I was obliged to cobble together songs and dances in the ordinary way. As a result, though full of charming ideas which do not spoil the effect of the scenes, this interlude had a very moderate success. I removed Jelyotte's recitative and restored my own as I had originally written it and as it was in the printed score; and this recitative, though somewhat frenchified, I admit – that is to say drawled by the actors – far from shocking anyone, has been as much of a success as the airs, and has seemed even to the public quite as well composed. I dedicated the play to M. Duclos, who had given it his protection, and I declared that this would be my only dedication. I made a second one, however, with his consent; but he must have felt still more honoured by this exception than if I had never made one at all.

I have a number of anecdotes about this piece, but matters more deserving of mention prevent my expatiating on them here. Perhaps I shall return to them one day in my supplement. One, however, I cannot possibly omit, for it may well be relevant to all that follows. One day I was looking through Baron d'Holbach's music in his study when, after having turned over some compositions of various kinds, he showed me a collection of pieces for the clavichord. 'Here are some things that have been written especially for me,' he said. 'They are

very tasteful. Nobody knows them, and no one will ever see them except myself. You might pick one of them and put it into your interlude.' Having far more ideas in my head for airs and orchestral pieces than I could possibly use, I was not much interested in his. However he was so pressing that, to oblige him, I chose a pastorale, which I shortened and turned into a trio for the entry of Colette's companions. Some months afterwards, whilst the *Soothsayer* was running, I went to Grimm's one day and found some people around his clavichord, from which he hastily got up as I came in. Looking automatically at his music-stand I saw this same collection of Baron d'Holbach's open precisely at the piece which he had so pressed me to take, with the assurance that it would never leave his hands. Some time later I saw this same collection again open on M. d'Épinay's clavichord, one day when there was a concert at this house. Neither Grimm nor anyone else ever spoke of this air, and I only mention it myself because a short-lived rumour got around some time later that I was not the author of *The Village Soothsayer*. As I was never a great performer I am certain that if it had not been for my *Dictionary of Music* they would have ended up by saying that I knew nothing about the subject.*

Some time before *The Village Soothsayer* was performed there arrived in Paris some Italian comic opera singers who were put on at the Opera. No one foresaw the effect they were to have. Although they were execrable and the orchestra – at that time a most ignorant lot – performed wilful murder on the pieces they played, the Italians did not fail to do irreparable harm to French opera. The comparison between the two idioms, which could be heard on the same day and in the same theatre, opened French ears; absolutely no one could endure their drawling music after the lively and incisive singing of the Italians. Once these had finished everyone walked out, and they had to change the order of playing and put them at the end. They put on *Églé*, *Pygmalion*, *The Sylph*: nothing would do. Only *The Village Soothsayer* could stand the comparison and still pleased when played after even *La serva padrona*.† When I composed my entertainment my head was full of these pieces; it was they that gave me the idea for it, but I was far from foreseeing that one day it and they would be judged side by side. If I had been a plagiarist how many thefts would then have been revealed, and what pains would have been taken to point them out! But not at all. Try though they might, they could

*I could not foresee that, notwithstanding my *Dictionary*, this would actually be said at a later date.

[† By Pergolesi.]

not find the slightest reminiscence in my music of any other; and all my songs, when compared to their alleged models, proved as new as the style of music I had created. If Mondonville or Rameau had been subjected to such a test, they would have emerged in tatters.

The Italian players gained some very ardent partisans for their music. All Paris divided into two camps, whose excitement was greater than if they had differed over politics or religion. The more powerful and more numerous party, made up of the great, the rich, and the ladies, supported French music; the other, which was more active, more distinguished, and more enthusiastic, was made up of true music-lovers, talented people, and men of genius. This little band gathered at the Opera beneath the Queen's box. The other party filled all the rest of the pit and the house; but its principal meeting-place was beneath the King's box. That is the origin of the party names famous at that time, the 'King's corner' and the 'Queen's corner'. As the dispute became livelier, it gave rise to pamphlets. If the King's corner tried to be witty, it was ridiculed by the *Little Prophet*; if it resorted to argument, it was crushed by the *Letter on French Music*. These two little essays, one by Grimm and the other by myself, are the only ones that have survived the dispute; all the rest are dead already.

But *The Little Prophet*, which despite my denials, was for some time persistently attributed to me, was generally taken as a joke, and did not involve its author in the slightest trouble; whereas the *Letter on Music* was treated seriously and raised the whole nation against me, for this attack on its music was taken as an insult. A description of the incredible effect of this pamphlet would be worthy of the pen of Tacitus. It was the time of the great quarrel between the courts* and the clergy. The courts had just been dissolved; the excitement was at its height; there was every danger of an approaching revolt. My pamphlet appeared, and immediately all other quarrels were forgotten; no one could think of anything except the threat to French music. The only revolt now was against me, and such was the outburst that the nation has never quite recovered from it. At Court they were merely deciding between the Bastille and banishment; and the warrant of arrest would certainly have been signed if M. de Voyer had not shown how ridiculous it all was. Whoever reads that this pamphlet probably prevented a revolution in France will think that he is dreaming. Yet it is an actual fact, which all Paris can still bear witness to, for it is less than fifteen years since that singular incident.

[* *Le Parlement de Paris.*]

Although no attempt was made on my liberty, I was certainly not spared from insult; even my life was in danger. The Opera orchestra entered into a solemn plot to assassinate me as I left the theatre. I was warned of this, but attended the performances even more assiduously; and I did not know till long afterwards that M. Ancelet, a Musketeer officer who felt friendly towards me, had defeated the object of the plot by providing me with an escort, unknown to myself, as I left after the performance. The city had recently taken over the control of the Opera, and the Mayor's first exploit was to deprive me of my free pass, and that in the most insulting manner possible: that is to say by having me publicly refused admission, so that I was obliged to take an amphitheatre ticket to save myself the indignity of being turned away that day. The injustice was all the more flagrant because the only price I had asked for my play when I gave them the rights of it, was a free pass for life. For although this was the privilege of all authors and I had a double claim to it, I nevertheless expressly stipulated for it in the presence of M. Duclos. It is true that they sent me, by the Opera cashier, a fee of fifty *louis* that I had not asked for. This fifty *louis*, however, was far less than the sum due to me by the regulations; nor had it anything to do with the free pass which I had stipulated for, and which was entirely independent of it. There was such a combination of injustice and savagery about this behaviour that the public, although at the height of its animosity against me, exclaimed loudly in the theatre next morning that it was a shame to take away an author's pass like that, when he had richly earned it, and was even entitled to demand free seats for two, which proves the truth of the Italian proverb: *ognun' ama la giustizia in casa d'altrui*.*

In face of this I was left with only one course of action, to demand my work back, since I had been refused the agreed recompense. I wrote to that effect to M. d'Argenson, who was responsible for the Opera, and I appended to my letter an unanswerable statement of my case which, like my letters, received no reply and was of no avail. This injustice and his silence hurt me extremely and did not serve to enhance my very poor opinion of his character and his ability. Thus my piece was kept at the Opera, and I was defrauded of the price for which I had surrendered my rights. Perpetrated by the weak against the strong, this would be a theft; but when the strong treat the weak in that way, it is merely appropriation of another's property.

As for my monetary profit from the work, although it did not

* Everyone loves justice in another man's case.

bring me in a quarter of the sum it would have brought to anyone else, it was still large enough to enable me to subsist for several years, and to make up for my copying, which continued to be unremunerative. I received a hundred *louis* from the King, and fifty from Mme de Pompadour for the Belle-Vue performance, in which she took the part of Colin herself, also fifty from the Opera and five hundred francs from Pissot for the printing rights. So this entertainment, which only cost me five or six weeks' work, brought me in almost as much money, in spite of my misfortune and stupidities, as *Émile* has done to this day, though it cost me twenty years of meditation, and three years to write. But I paid dearly for the pecuniary ease I received from this play by the endless troubles it brought down on my head; it sowed the seed of those secret jealousies which did not break out till long afterwards. After this success I no longer found in Grimm or Diderot or – with a few exceptions – in the other literary men of my acquaintance, the cordiality, the sincerity, and the pleasure in my company that I had hitherto believed them to feel. The moment I appeared at the Baron's general conversation ceased, people gathered in little knots, whispering into each other's ears, and I was left alone, at a loss for anyone to speak to. For a long time I endured these painful slights and, finding that Mme d'Holbach, a gentle and charming woman, always received me kindly, I put up with her husband's rudeness for so long as I could stand it. But one day he attacked me so violently without cause or excuse, in front of Diderot, who did not say a word, and of Margency, who has often told me since of his wonder at the mildness and moderation of my replies, that I was finally driven from his house by this disgraceful treatment. And when I left I decided never to return again. This did not prevent me from always speaking respectfully of him and his house, whereas he never referred to me in other than insulting and scornful terms. The only name he had for me was *that little pedant*, and yet he could not point to a single wrong of any kind that I had ever done to him or to anyone in whom he was interested. So it was that he finally fulfilled my predictions and my fears. My own opinion is that my so-called friends would have forgiven my writing books, and very good books, because such glory was not out of their own reach; but they could not forgive me for having composed an opera, nor for the work's brilliant success, because not one of them was in the position to pursue such a course or to aspire to the same honours. Duclos alone, who was superior to such jealousy, seemed even to feel a warmer friendship for

me, and introduced me to Mlle Quinault, in whose house I was treated with all the attentions, civilities, and favours that I had found lacking at Mme d'Holbach's.

Whilst *The Village Soothsayer* was being performed at the Opera, its author was also under discussion, though somewhat less fruitful discussion, at the Comédie-Française. After trying in vain for seven or eight years to get my *Narcissus* staged by the Italians, I had grown disgusted with their theatre owing to the poor performances of its actors in French plays. In fact I would rather have had my piece performed at the Comédie Française than by them, and mentioned this wish to La Noue, the actor, whose acquaintance I had made and who is, as is well known, a distinguished man and an author. He liked *Narcissus* and undertook to get it put on anonymously, and in the meantime he got me a free pass, which was a great pleasure to me, since I have always preferred the French theatre to the other two. The piece was received with applause and played without mention of the author's name; but I have reason to believe that the actors and many others were not ignorant of it. Mlle Gaussin and Mlle Grandval played the parts of the female lovers; and although, in my opinion, the point of the whole thing was missed, it could not be called a really bad performance. However, I was surprised and touched by the indulgence of the public, who had the patience to listen quietly from beginning to end and even to allow of its being played a second time without showing the least signs of restlessness. As for me, I was so bored at the first performance that I could not stay to the end. On leaving the theatre I went into the Café de Procope, where I found Boissy and a few others, who had probably been as bored as I. There I said my *peccavi* aloud, humbly or proudly confessing myself the author of the play and saying of it what everyone else was thinking. This public confession by the author of a poor piece and a failure was much admired, though I did not find it very painful. I even discovered some satisfaction for my self-esteem in the courage with which I made it. Indeed I think that on this occasion my pride in speaking was greater than my foolish shame would have been if I had kept quiet. However, as it was certain that although the play was wooden when performed it would bear reading, I had it printed, and in the preface, which is one of my best pieces of writing, I began to set out my principles a little more fully than I had done hitherto.

I had soon the opportunity to develop them completely in a work of the greatest importance. For it was in that year, I think, of 1753,

that the Dijon Academy proposed 'The Inequality of Mankind' as a subject for discussion. I was struck by this great question and surprised at the Academy's daring to propose it. But since they had the courage, I thought that I might be bold enough to discuss it, and set about the task.

In order to think this great matter out at my leisure, I went to Saint-Germain for some seven or eight days with Thérèse, and our landlady, who was a decent woman, and a woman friend of hers. I think of this trip as one of the most pleasant in my life. The weather was very fine; those good women undertook all the trouble and expense; Thérèse amused herself in their company, and I, without a care in the world, came in at meal-times and was unrestrainedly gay over table. For all the rest of the day, wandering deep into the forest, I sought and I found the vision of those primitive times, the history of which I proudly traced. I demolished the petty lies of mankind; I dared to strip man's nature naked, to follow the progress of time, and trace the things which have distorted it; and by comparing man as he had made himself with man as he is by nature I showed him in his pretended perfection the true source of his misery. Exalted by these sublime meditations, my soul soared towards the Divinity; and from that height I looked down on my fellow men pursuing the blind path of their prejudices, of their errors, of their misfortunes and their crimes. Then I cried to them in a feeble voice which they could not hear, 'Madmen who ceaselessly complain of Nature, learn that all your misfortunes arise from yourselves!'

The outcome of these meditations was the *Essay upon Inequality*,* which Diderot preferred to all my other works. His advice was most useful to me in the writing of it.† But nowhere in Europe did it find more than a few readers who understood it, and not one of them chose to speak of it. It had been written to compete for the prize. I

* *Le Discours sur l'inégalité.*

† At the time when I wrote that essay I had as yet no suspicion of Diderot's and Grimm's great plot; otherwise I should easily have seen how the former abused my confidence to give my writings that hard tone and sombre colouring which they ceased to have when he no longer acted as my mentor. The piece about the philosopher who argues with his ears stopped up in order to harden himself against the complaints of a man in distress, is of his making; and he supplied me with other ideas even harsher, which I could not bring myself to use. But as I attributed his black humour to his confinement in the keep of Vincennes – for there is a pretty strong tinge of it in his *Clairval* – it never came into my head to suspect him of any malicious intention.

sent it in, therefore, though I was certain beforehand that it would not win, for I knew very well that it is not for work of this kind that Academy prizes are founded.

The trip and the occupation improved my health and my humour. Several years before I had been so tortured by my retention of urine that I had put myself entirely into the doctors' hands. They had not alleviated my complaint, but had exhausted my strength and ruined my constitution. On returning from Saint-Germain I found that I had more strength and felt a great deal better. I acted on this discovery and decided to recover or die without physicians or drugs. So I said good-bye to them for ever, and started to live from day to day, staying quiet when I could not move and walking as soon as I had the strength. Paris life among pretentious people was so little to my taste; the cabals of men of letters, their shameful quarrels, the lack of honesty in their books, and the important airs they assumed in the world were so disgusting and antipathetic to me; I found so little gentleness, open-heartedness, or sincerity even in the company of my friends, that in my disgust for that turbulent life I began to long ardently to live in the country and, seeing that my profession did not allow me to settle there, I hastened at least to spend the few hours that I had free away from the town. For some months, immediately after my dinner, I would go and walk alone in the Bois de Boulogne, thinking over subjects for works to be written and not returning till night.

1754-1756 Gauffecourt, with whom I was then extremely intimate, found himself obliged to make a business journey to Geneva, and proposed that I should go with him. I agreed. As I was not well enough to do without the care of my *boss* it was decided that she should accompany us, and that her mother should look after the house. When all our arrangements were made we three set out together, on the 1st June 1754.

I must mention this journey as the occasion when for the first time in my forty-two years – for that was then my age – I sustained a shock to my naturally confiding nature which had been mine since birth and in which I had always trusted unreservedly, with no unhappy results. We had a hired carriage, which took us by very short stages without changing horses, and we were barely half-way when Thérèse showed the greatest repugnance to remaining alone in the carriage with Gauffecourt. At such times as, in spite of her entreaties, I

insisted on getting out she would also get out and walk with me. For some time I scolded her for this whim, even going so far as positively to protest against it, to such effect that she found herself finally compelled to tell me her reason. I thought that I was dreaming. But I was rudely disillusioned when I heard that my friend M. de Gauffecourt, a gouty old man of more than sixty, impotent and worn out by his pleasures and dissipations, had been trying ever since we had set out to corrupt a person no longer young or beautiful, who belonged to his friend, and this in the lowest, the most shameful way. For he had gone so far as to offer her his purse, and to try and excite her by reading her a filthy book and showing her obscene pictures in it. Thérèse, in her indignation, had once thrown his beastly book out of the window; and she told me that on the very first day, when I had gone to bed before supper with a violent headache, he had spent the whole time they had been alone together in attempts and behaviour worthier of a satyr or a he-goat than of a decent man to whose care I had confided my companion and myself. What a surprise! What a fresh grief to me! Until then I had believed that friendship inevitably carries with it those pleasant and noble feelings that lend it all its charm. But now for the first time in my life I found myself compelled to associate it with contempt, and to withdraw my confidence and respect from a man whom I loved and who, I believed, loved me. The wretch concealed his vileness from me and, in order not to betray Thérèse, I found myself compelled not to reveal my scorn and to hide in the depths of my heart those feelings that he was not to know. Sweet and holy illusion of friendship! Gauffecourt was the first to lift your veil from my eyes. How many cruel hands have prevented its ever falling again!

At Lyons I left Gauffecourt, to make my way through Savoy. For I could not bring myself to pass so near to Mamma and not see her again. I saw her. In what a state, oh God! How low she had fallen! What was left to her of her former virtue? Was this the same Mme de Warens who had once been so brilliant, and to whom M. Pontverre, the priest, had introduced me? How it wrung my heart! I could see no resource left to her but to leave the country. I repeated, earnestly and in vain, the entreaties I had several times sent her in my letters, to come and live quietly with me, and I would devote my days and Thérèse's to making her life happy. But she clung to her pension, of which, punctually though it was paid, she had long since ceased to draw a penny herself, and would not listen to me. I gave her once

more a small part of my money, much less than I ought to have done, much less than I should have done if I had not been perfectly certain that she would not be a penny the better off for it. During my stay in Geneva she took a journey through the Chablais and came to meet me at Grange-Canal. She had not enough money to complete her trip, and I had not as much on me as she needed; I sent it after her an hour later by Thérèse. Poor Mamma! I must give one more proof of her goodness of heart. She had no other jewel left but one last little ring, and this she took from her finger to put on Thérèse's, who immediately replaced it upon Mamma's, at the same time kissing that noble hand and moistening it with her tears. Ah, that was the moment in which I should have paid my debt. I should have abandoned everything to follow her, to attach myself to her till her last hour, and share her fate, whatever it might be. I did nothing of the kind. Taken up with another attachment, I felt the tie which bound me to her loosening. For I had no hope of being able to turn my affection for her to any good purpose. I sighed over her but did not follow her. Of all the remorse I have suffered in my life this was the bitterest and the most enduring. By my conduct I earned all the terrible punishments which have never since ceased to fall on my head. I hope they may have atoned for my ingratitude. For there was ingratitude in my conduct, but my heart was too deeply wounded for it ever to have been the heart of an ungrateful man.

Before leaving Paris I had outlined the dedication of my *Essay upon Inequality*. I had finished it at Chambéry and dated it from that place, considering it better, in order to avoid all controversy, not to date it from France or Geneva. On my arrival in that city I gave myself up to the republican enthusiasm that had led me there, and that enthusiasm was increased by the welcome I received. Fêted and made much of by all classes, I surrendered entirely to patriotic zeal and, ashamed of being excluded from my rights as a citizen by my profession of a faith different from that of my fathers, I decided publicly to return to Protestantism. The Gospel being, in my opinion, the same for all Christians, and the fundamentals of dogma only differing over points that men attempted to explain but were unable to understand, it seemed to me to rest with the Sovereign alone in each country to settle the form of worship and the unintelligible dogma as well. It was therefore, I thought, the citizens' duty to accept the dogma and follow the cult of their country, both as prescribed by law. My association with the Encyclopaedists, far from shaking my faith, had strengthened

it because of my natural aversion for quarrelling and for parties. My study of man and the Universe had shown me everywhere final causes and the intelligence which directed them. My reading of the Bible, particularly of the Gospels, to which I had applied myself for some years, had led me to despise the base and foolish interpretations given to the words of Jesus Christ by persons quite unworthy of understanding them. In a word, philosophy, whilst attaching me to what was essential in religion, had freed me from the host of petty forms with which men have obscured it. Considering that for a reasonable man there were no two ways of being a Christian, I considered also that everything to do with form and discipline in each country belonged to the province of the law. It followed from this most sensible, social, and peaceable principle, which has brought such cruel persecutions upon me, that since I wished to be a citizen I must become a Protestant and return to the established faith of my country. I made up my mind, and went so far as to submit myself to the instructions of the minister in the parish where I was staying, which was outside the town. I only wished not to be obliged to appear before the consistory. Ecclesiastical law, however, was definite on this point; but it was agreed to make an exception in my favour, and a commission of five or six members was nominated to receive my profession of faith in private. Unfortunately Perdriau, the minister, a mild and pleasant man with whom I was on close terms, took it into his head to tell me that they were delighted at the prospect of hearing me speak in their small assembly. This expectation so alarmed me that, after having studied the little speech I had prepared night and day for three weeks, I got so confused when it came to reciting it that I could not bring out a single word, and behaved at that interview like the stupidest of schoolboys. The commission spoke on my behalf, and I like a fool replied 'Yes' or 'No'. I was then admitted to communion, reinstated in my rights as a citizen and enrolled as such in the list book of guards, who are paid by citizens and full burgesses only. I also attended an extraordinary general council to receive the oath from the syndic* Mussard. I was so touched by the kindnesses shown me on this occasion by the council and the consistory, and by the courteous and obliging behaviour of all the magistrates, ministers, and citizens that I gave in to the continual persuasions of the excellent Deluc, considerably reinforced by my own inclinations, and decided that I would return to Paris for the sole purpose of breaking up my house-

[* The head of the corporation.]

hold, putting my modest affairs in order, and finding Mme Le Vasseur and her husband a situation or providing for their subsistence, and then return with Thérèse and establish myself at Geneva for the rest of my days.

Once I had taken this resolution, I suspended all serious business in order to amuse myself with my friends till the time of my departure; and my favourite pastime was to row round the lake with Deluc, his daughter-in-law, his two sons, and my Thérèse. We spent seven days making the circuit in the finest possible weather. I retained the clearest memories of these spots at the other end of the lake which had formerly delighted me and which I described some years afterwards in *The New Héloïse*.*

The principal acquaintances I made in Geneva, other than the Delucs, whom I have mentioned, were the young minister Vernes, whom I had already known in Paris and whom I thought to be worth more than he subsequently proved to be: M. Perdriau, then a country pastor and now Professor of Literature, whose most mild and pleasant company I shall always regret although he has since thought proper to dissociate himself from me; M. Jalabert, then Professor of Physics, and subsequently counsellor and syndic, to whom I read my *Essay on Inequality*, though not the dedication, and who seemed delighted with it; Professor Lullin, with whom I remained in correspondence until his death and who even commissioned me to purchase books for the library; Professor Vernet, who turned his back on me, like everyone else, after I had given him proofs of affection and confidence which should have touched him, if a theologian is capable of being touched by anything; Chappuis, Gauffecourt's clerk and successor, who meant to supplant his master and was soon supplanted himself; Marcet de Mézières, an old friend of my father's, who had also shown himself mine, a man who had once deserved well of his country, but who when he turned playwright became a candidate for the Two Hundred, changed his principles, and cut an absurd figure in his last years. But of all my new acquaintances the one of whom I expected most was Moultout, a most promising young man, to judge by his talents and his eager intelligence, and one whom I have always loved, though his behaviour to me has often been dubious and though he has been intimate with my bitterest enemies, but whom, nevertheless, I cannot help still regarding as one day destined to be the defender of my memory and the avenger of his friend.

* *La Nouvelle Héloïse*.

Amidst all these diversions I did not lose my taste for solitary walks, nor my habit of taking them. I frequently wandered far along the lake side and, as I walked, my brain was too accustomed to work to remain idle. I digested the plan I had already formed for my *Political Institutions*,* of which I shall soon have to speak; I meditated a History of the Valais, and I planned a prose tragedy on no less a subject than Lucrece, with which I had some hope of overcoming derision, even though I ventured to bring that unfortunate woman back to the stage when she had become an impossible subject for the French theatre. At the same time I tried my hand at Tacitus, and made a translation of the first book of his Histories, which will be found among my papers.

After staying four months in Geneva I returned to Paris in October, and avoided Lyons on my way back so as not to travel with Gauffecourt. As my plan was not to go back to Geneva until the next spring I resumed my usual habits and occupations during the winter. The chief of these was the proof-reading of my *Essay on Inequality*, which I was having printed in Holland by Rey, the bookseller, whose acquaintance I had recently made in Geneva. As this work was dedicated to the Republic, and as this dedication might be displeasing to the Council, I decided to wait and see what reception it would have in Geneva before returning there. Its effect was unfavourable to me; and that dedication, which had been inspired by the purest patriotism, brought me nothing but enemies on the Council and the jealousy of some citizens. M. Chouel, then first syndic, wrote me a courteous but cold letter which will be found among my papers (Packet A, No. 3). I received compliments from some private individuals, from Deluc and Jalabert amongst others, and that was all. I did not find a single Genevese truly grateful for the strength of emotion to be felt in that work. Their indifference shocked everyone who was conscious of it. I remember an occasion at Clichy, when I was dining with Mme Dupin in the company of Crommelin, the Resident of the Republic, and M. de Mairan, and when the latter said that the Council owed me a reward and public honours for the work, and that it would be a disgrace if it failed to provide them, Crommelin, who was a dark little man, and coarse and spiteful, did not dare to reply in my presence, but he gave a frightful grimace which made Mme Dupin smile. The only benefit which this work brought me, besides that of satisfying my own feelings, was the title of 'Citizen', which was conferred on me

* *Institutions politiques.*

by my friends and afterwards used also by the public, and which I have subsequently lost through having deserved it too well.

This lack of success would not have deterred me, however, from retiring to Geneva, had not motives with more sway over my heart contributed to my change of plan. M. d'Épinay was spending an enormous sum on the completion of a missing wing of the Château de La Chevrette. One day when we had gone there with Mme d'Épinay to inspect the work we extended our walk by almost a mile, to the park reservoir which lay close to the forest of Montmorency, and where there was a pretty vegetable garden with a small and very dilapidated cottage called the Hermitage. This most pleasant and solitary spot had struck me the first time I saw it, before my trip to Geneva, and in my delight I had let fall the remark: 'Ah, madame, what a delightful place to live in! Here is a refuge absolutely made for me.' Mme d'Épinay had not displayed much interest in what I said. But on my second visit I was most surprised to find in place of the old ruins an almost entirely new small house, very well planned and most convenient for a little household of three. Mme d'Épinay had had the work carried out quietly and at a very small cost, by deflecting some materials and a few workmen from the building of the Château. On this second visit she said, as she saw my surprise: 'Here is your refuge, Mr Bear. You chose it yourself. It is offered you out of friendship. I hope that it will put an end to your cruel idea of parting from me.' I do not think that ever in my life I was more deeply or more pleasantly touched. I moistened the hand of my friend and benefactress with my tears; and if I was not conquered at that moment, I was at least extremely shaken. Mme d'Épinay would not be denied and became most pressing. Indeed she employed so many different methods and so many people in her efforts to get round me, even enlisting the aid of Mme Le Vasseur and her daughter, that she finally triumphed over my resolution. I renounced the idea of living in my native country and promised to move into the Hermitage; and while we waited for the building to dry out she undertook the task of collecting the furniture so that everything should be ready for us to go there in the following spring.

One circumstance which greatly contributed to my decision was Voltaire's settling close to Geneva. I realized that he would work a revolution in the city, and that if I returned I should find in my native land the tone, the airs, and the customs which were driving me from Paris; that I should have to maintain a constant struggle, and that I

should have no other alternative but to behave like an insufferable pedant, or like a coward and a bad citizen. The letter which Voltaire wrote me on the subject of my last work gave me the chance of hinting at my fears in my reply; the effect it produced confirmed them. From that moment I gave Geneva up for lost, and I was not mistaken. I ought perhaps to have gone and faced the storm, if I had felt any capacity in myself for doing so. But what could I have done alone, being both timid and a bad speaker, against an arrogant and wealthy man, backed by the influence of the great, magnificently eloquent, and already the idol of the women and the young people? I was afraid of uselessly exposing myself to danger. I listened only to my peaceable nature and my love of quiet which, if it deceived me, continues to do so to-day on the same score. By retiring to Geneva I might have spared myself great personal misfortunes; but I doubt whether with all my ardent patriotic feeling I should have done any great or useful service to my country.

Tronchin,* who went and established himself at Geneva at more or less this time, came to Paris somewhat later to set up as a quack, and brought some of its treasures with him. On his arrival he came to see me with the Chevalier de Jancourt. Mme d'Épinay was most anxious for a private consultation with him but it was not easy to get through the crowd. She turned to me, and I induced Tronchin to go and see her. Thus, under my auspices, they started a relationship which they afterwards strengthened at my expense. Such has always been my fate; the moment I have brought two friends together, whom I had made independently, they have never failed to combine against me. Although the conspiracy that the Tronchins entered into at that time for the enslavement of their country made it inevitable that they should all mortally hate me, the doctor nevertheless continued for some time to show me signs of good-will. He even wrote to me after his return to Geneva to offer me the post of honorary librarian. But my decision was taken, and the offer did not shake me.

At this time I again visited M. d'Holbach. The reason for my call was the death of his wife,† which had occurred – as had Mme de Francueil's – during my stay at Geneva. In giving me this news, Diderot spoke of the husband's profound grief, the thought of which deeply moved me. I was myself very sad at the death of that charming woman. I wrote a letter of condolence to M. d'Holbach. This tragedy made me forget all the wrongs he had done me; and when I was back

[* Theodore Tronchin (1709–81).]

[† On 26 August 1755.]

from Geneva, and he had returned from a tour of France which he had taken with Grimm and some other friends to distract his mind, I went to see him and continued to do so until I left for the Hermitage. When it was known in his circle that Mme d'Épinay, whom he did not yet visit, was preparing a house for me, sarcasms fell on me like hail; and the burden of them was that, needing the admiration and amusements of the town, I should not be able to stand even a fortnight's solitude. Knowing the true state of my own feelings, I let them talk and went on my way. M. d'Holbach, however, did not cease to be of service to me* and found me a place for dear old Le Vasseur, now over eighty, whose wife felt that he was too much of a burden and was continually begging me to relieve her of him. He was put into a poorhouse, where his extreme age and his distress at being away from his family sent him to the grave almost as soon as he arrived. His wife and his other children did not miss him much; but Thérèse, who loved him dearly, has never been able to get over his loss or to forgive herself for having allowed him, when so near his end, to go and finish his days so far away from her.

I received at more or less this time a visit that I had scarcely expected, although it was from a very old acquaintance. It was from my friend Venture, who came and surprised me one fine morning when he was the very last person in my thoughts. He had another man with him. And how changed he seemed! Gone were his old fine manners, and all I could see in him was an air of dissipation, which prevented my welcoming him at all warmly. Either I no longer looked on him with the same eyes, or debauchery had dulled his intellect, or all his original sparkle had been only the sparkle of his youth, which had gone from him. I viewed him almost with indifference, and we parted quite coldly. But when he had gone the memory of our old friendship forcibly recalled to me my own early years, which had been so delightfully, so virtuously devoted to that angelic woman who was now hardly less changed than he. It recalled all the little incidents of those happy days. It recalled my romantic journey to Tounes so innocently enjoyed in the company of those two

* Here is an example of the tricks my memory plays with me. Long after writing this I have just learned, while talking to my wife about her dear old father, that it was not M. d'Holbach, but M. de Chenonceaux, then one of the governors of the Hôtel-Dieu, who found him the place. I had so completely forgotten the incident, and had such a vivid memory of M. d'Holbach that I would have sworn it was he.

charming girls whose only favour had been to allow me one kiss of the hand, a day which had nevertheless left me such deep, such moving and such permanent regrets. It recalled all the delightful passions of a young heart which I had felt then in all their strength, and for which now I knew the time had gone for ever. And all these tender memories brought tears to my eyes for my vanished youth and for the delights that henceforth could be mine no more. Ah, what tears I should have wept over their tardy and melancholy return if I had foreseen the sorrows they were soon going to cost me.*

Before I left Paris, during the winter preceding my retirement, I enjoyed a pleasure much after my own heart, which I savoured in all its purity. Palissot, a member of the Nancy Academy, and well known as the author of several plays, had just put on a piece at Lunéville before the King of Poland. Into this play, apparently in the hopes of currying favour, he had introduced a character who had ventured to cross pens with a King. Stanislas, who was a generous man and no lover of satire, was annoyed at anyone daring to introduce personalities in his presence; and the Count de Tressan wrote to me, on that prince's instructions, stating that it was His Majesty's intention that Master Palissot should be expelled from his Academy. In answer I warmly entreated M. de Tressan to intercede with the King and obtain Palissot a pardon. The pardon was granted. But, when informing me of the fact on the King's behalf, M. de Tressan added that the incident was to be inscribed in the records of the Academy. I replied that this would be more like inflicting a perpetual punishment than granting a pardon. At last, by dint of persistence, I obtained the promise that there should be no mention of the matter at all in the records, and that no public trace of it should remain. In the course of all this I received protestations of esteem and regard not only from M. de Tressan but from the King, which flattered me exceedingly. I felt, indeed, on that occasion that the esteem of men in themselves estimable has a much sweeter and nobler effect upon the mind than that of vanity. I have transcribed into my collection M. de Tressan's letters and my replies, and the originals will be found in Packet A, Nos. 9, 10, and 11.

I am well aware that should these memoirs eventually see the light of day I shall myself be perpetuating the memory of an incident of which I intended to suppress all trace. But there are others that I am handing down with equal reluctance. The great object of my undertaking, always present to my eyes, and my indispensable duty to fulfil

it in its entirety, will not allow me to be deterred by weak considerations which might deflect me from my goal. In my strange, indeed unique, situation I owe too much to truth to owe anything more to any person. If I am to be known I must be known in all situations, good and bad. My *Confessions* are necessarily linked with the tales of many others; and in everything bearing on myself I record the truth about myself and others with equal frankness, in the belief that I owe no more consideration to other people than I show towards myself, although I should like to show them much more. I want always to be fair and truthful, to say as much good as I can of others, and only to speak evil when it concerns myself and in so far as I am compelled to do so. Who has the right to demand more of me, in the situation I am in? My *Confessions* are not intended to appear in my lifetime, or in the lifetime of the persons concerned. If I were master of my own destiny and that of my book's, it would not see the light till long after my death and theirs. But the attempts made by my powerful oppressors, who dread the truth, to destroy every trace of it, compel me to make every effort consonant with the strictest justice and the most scrupulous fairness, in order to preserve them. If my memory were to be eclipsed with me, rather than compromise anyone I would uncomplainingly endure an unjust and transitory obloquy. But since my name is fated to live, I must endeavour to transmit with it the memory of that unfortunate man who bore it, as he actually was and not as his unjust enemies unremittingly endeavour to paint him.

BOOK NINE

1756 So impatient was I to live at the Hermitage that I could not wait for the return of the fine weather; and as soon as my quarters were ready I hastily moved in amidst the loud derision of the Holbach circle, who loudly predicted that I should not be able to stand three months of solitude, and that in a little while they would see me come back with my tail between my legs to live like them in Paris. For my part, having been out of my element for fifteen years and finding myself now on the point of returning to it, I did not even pay any attention to their jeers. Ever since I had unwillingly plunged into the world I had not ceased to regret my dear Charmettes and the pleasant life I had led there. I felt that I was born for retirement and the country; it was impossible for me to live happily anywhere else. At Venice amidst the stir of public business, in a dignified and more or less diplomatic position, and proud in my hopes of promotion; at Paris, in the whirl of high society, at luxurious suppers, amidst the glitter of the theatre, in a cloud of vainglory; always the memory of my woods and streams and solitary walks would come to distract and sadden me, and draw from me sighs of longing and desire. None of the labours to which I had been able to subject myself, none of the ambitious projects which had fitfully roused my energy, had any other purpose but that one day I should enjoy the happy rural ease which I now flattered myself I was on the point of attaining. Although I had not acquired the honest independence which I had thought alone might lead me to it, I considered that my peculiar situation enabled me to dispense with it and that I might arrive at the same end by an entirely opposite way. I had not the slightest income; but I had a name and talents. I was temperate and had rid myself of my expensive wants – all those that depended upon public opinion. Moreover, although lazy, I was industrious when I wished to be, and my indolence was not so much that of an idler as of an independent man, who only likes to work in his own time. My trade of music-copying was neither brilliant nor lucrative; but it was certain. The world approved my courage in having chosen it. I could reckon never to be short of work, and if I worked hard I could earn enough to live on. Two thousand francs which remained over from the profits of *The Village*

Soothsayer and of my other writings left me sufficient reserves to prevent my being pushed for money; and several works which were then in hand promised me sufficient in addition, without resort to the booksellers, to enable me to work in peace without exhausting myself, and even to profit from my leisure and my walks. My little household, made up of three people, all usefully employed, was not very costly to keep up. Indeed my resources, being proportionate to my needs and my desires, might reasonably promise me a long and happy life in the condition that my tastes had led me to choose.

I could have thrown myself entirely into the more lucrative side and, instead of subjecting my pen to the copyist's task, have devoted it entirely to writings which, considering the flight which I had taken and which I considered myself in the position to sustain, might have enabled me to live in plenty, or even in luxury, had I been in the least willing to combine literary scheming with the labour of publishing good books. But I felt that writing for a livelihood would soon have stifled my genius and killed my talent, which lay less in my pen than in my heart and arose solely from a proud and high-minded way of thought, which alone could nourish it. Nothing vigorous, nothing great, can flow from an entirely venal pen. Necessity, or greed perhaps, might have made me work fast rather than well. If the need of success had not thrown me into cabals, it would have made me try to say not so much what was useful and true but things which would please the multitude; and instead of the distinguished author I was capable of being I should merely have been a scribbler. No, no, I have always felt that the profession of author is not and never could be an honourable and illustrious one except in so far as it is not a trade. It is too difficult to think nobly when one only thinks for a living. If one is to have the strength and the courage to speak great truths one must not depend on one's success. I threw my books to the public in the certainty that I had spoken for the common good, and without a care for anything else. If the work was rejected, so much the worse for those who refused to profit by it. For myself, I did not require their approbation in order to live; my occupation could nourish me if my books did not sell; and that is precisely what made them sell.

It was on 9 April 1756 that I left Paris never to live in a town again; for I do not count as residence a few short stays that I have made, in London, Paris, and other cities, but always on my way through or against my will. Mme d'Épinay came to fetch the three of us in her carriage. Her farmer came and took charge of my modest luggage,

and I was installed that same day. I found my little retreat arranged and furnished simply, but neatly and even with taste. The hand which had attended to the furnishing conferred an inestimable value on it in my eyes. I found it delightful to be the guest of my friend, in a house of my own choice that she had built expressly for me.

Although it was cold and there was still some snow lying, the earth was beginning to sprout; there were violets and primroses to be seen, the buds of the trees were beginning to break, and the very night of my arrival was marked by the first nightingale's song, which we heard almost at my window, in a wood adjoining the house. Waking after a light sleep, I forgot my change of home and imagined myself still in the Rue de Grenelle, when suddenly that warbling made me start, and I cried in my delight: 'At last all my wishes are fulfilled.' My first thought was to surrender myself to the influence of the rural objects around me. Instead of beginning to plan my new abode, I began to plan my walks, and there was not a path, a plantation, a wood, or any corner around my house that I had not visited before next day. The more closely I examined this charming retreat, the more I felt that it was made for me. The spot, which was not wild but solitary, transported me in mind to the ends of the earth. It possessed those striking beauties that are hardly ever to be found in the neighbourhood of cities; and never, if one were suddenly put down there, could one have supposed oneself only a dozen miles from Paris.

After revelling for some days in my rural enchantment I thought of arranging my papers and regulating my occupations. I set aside my mornings, as I had always done, for copying, and my afternoons for walks, on which I would take my little notebook and my pencil. For never having been able to write or think at my ease except in the open air, I was not tempted to alter my methods. I reckoned therefore that the forest of Montmorency, which was almost at my door, would henceforth be my study. I had several works already begun, and I passed them in review. I was fairly fertile in ideas, but in the bustle of the town production had hitherto gone slowly. I counted on displaying a little more application once I had less to distract me. I think that I fulfilled this expectation fairly well. For, considering that I was often ill, often at La Chevrette, at Épinay, at Eaubonne, at the Château of Montmorency, often beset at home by the idle and curious and always occupied for half the day at my copying, anyone who will reckon up and take into account all that I produced during the six years that I

spent at the Hermitage and at Montmorency will conclude, I am sure, that if I wasted any time during that period, it was certainly not out of idleness.

Of the various works that I had on the stocks there was one on which I had long meditated and to which I was more attracted than to the others. To it I was anxious to devote the whole of my life, for it would, in my opinion, put the seal on my reputation. This was my *Political Institutions*. It was thirteen or fourteen years since I had conceived the original idea for it, at the time when I was in Venice and had some opportunity of observing the defects in that Republic's highly vaunted constitution. Since then my ideas had been greatly broadened by my study of the history of morals. I had seen that everything is rooted in politics and that, whatever might be attempted, no people would ever be other than the nature of their government made them. So the great question of the best possible government seemed to me to reduce itself to this: 'What is the nature of the government best fitted to create the most virtuous, the most enlightened, the wisest, and, in fact, the best people, taking the word "best" in its highest sense?' I believed that I saw a close relationship between that question and another, very nearly though not quite the same: 'What is the government which by its nature always adheres closest to the law?' From which one comes to: 'What is the law?' and to a chain of questions of that magnitude. I saw that all this was leading me to some great truths which would make for the happiness of the human race, but above all for that of my native land, whose ideas of law and liberty had not seemed to me, on my recent journey, as just or as clear-cut as I could have wished; and I considered this indirect method of teaching them these truths the best calculated to spare the pride of the citizens and to secure me forgiveness for having been able to see a little farther in this respect than they.

Although I had been engaged in this work for five or six years, I had not got very far with it. Books of this kind require reflection, leisure, and quiet. Besides, I was working at it, as they say, behind closed doors, and I had preferred not to communicate my plan to anyone, even to Diderot. I was afraid that it would seem too bold for the age and the country in which I was writing, and that my friends' alarm might hinder me in the execution.* I did not yet know whether

* It was Duclos's wise severity that I particularly feared. As for Diderot, all my talks with him always tended, I do not know why, to make me more satirical and caustic than I was by nature. It was that which deterred me from

it would be finished in time or in such a manner as to admit of its publication during my lifetime. I wished to be free to devote everything to my subject that it asked of me, in the assurance that as I had no satirical vein and never cared to indulge in personalities I should, if fairly judged, always be above criticism. Of course, I wished to make full use of the right to think which was mine by birth, though always with respect for the government under which I had to live, and without ever disobeying its laws; and whilst most careful not to violate international law, I had no intention either of timorously renouncing its advantages.

I will even admit that as a foreigner living in France I found my position most favourable for truth-telling. For I knew that if I continued, as I intended, to print nothing in the country without licence I need account to nobody for my opinions or for their publication anywhere else. I should have been much less free even at Geneva, where the magistrates would have had the right to censure the contents of my books, wherever they might have been printed. This consideration had played a great part in making me yield to Mme d'Épinay's persuasions and give up my plan of settling in Geneva. I felt, as I have written in *Émile*, short of being an intriguer, if one wishes to devote one's books to the true benefit of one's country, one must write them abroad.

What made me feel still happier about my position was my conviction that the government of France, though it might not look on me with great favour, would make it a point of honour, if not to protect me, at least to leave me undisturbed. It seemed to me a very simple yet skilful stroke of policy to make a virtue of tolerating what could not be prevented, since if they had expelled me from France, which was as much as they had the right to do, my books would have been written, and perhaps with less restraint. Whereas by not molesting me they would hold the author as a surety for his works and, what is more, would abolish prejudices firmly established throughout the rest of Europe by giving themselves the reputation of having an enlightened respect for international law.

Those who conclude from the result that my confidence deceived me may perhaps be wrong themselves. In the storm that has engulfed

consulting him on an enterprise in which I meant to employ solely the power of reason, without any vestige of venom or prejudice. The tone which I adopted for this work can be judged by that of *The Social Contract*, which derives from it.

me my books have served as a pretext; the attack was against myself. They cared very little about the author, but they wished to destroy Jean-Jacques; and the greatest crime they discovered in my writings was the honour they might bring me. But let us not anticipate. I do not know whether this mystery, which remains one to me, will hereafter be cleared up in my readers' eyes. I only know that if my declared principles really brought down on me the treatment I suffered, it would not have been so long before I was its victim. For that piece of writing in which these principles were most boldly, if not foolhardily, stated appeared to have produced its effect even before my retirement to the Hermitage, without anyone thinking, I will not say of picking a quarrel with me, but even of preventing the work's publication in France, where it sold as openly as in Holland. Afterwards *The New Héloïse* appeared with no greater difficulty and, I venture to say, gained the same applause; and, what may seem almost incredible, the profession of faith of this same Héloïse on her deathbed is identical with that of the Savoyard vicar. All that is challenging in *The Social Contract* had previously appeared in the *Essay on Inequality*; all that is challenging in *Émile* was previously in *Julie*. Now these outspoken passages excited no murmur against the two former works; it was not they, therefore, that created an outcry against the two latter.

Another enterprise of almost the same kind, but the plan of which had come to me later, was occupying more of my attention at that time. This was a selection from the works of the Abbé de Saint-Pierre,* whom I have been unable to mention till now owing to my preoccupation with the thread of my narrative. The idea had been suggested to me after my return from Geneva, by the Abbé de Mably, not directly but through the agency of Mme Dupin, who had a sort of interest in persuading me to take it up. She was one of the three or four Paris beauties whose spoilt child the Abbé de Saint-Pierre had been; and if she had not been his decided favourite she had at least shared the privilege with Mme d'Aiguillon. She preserved a respect and affection for the old fellow's memory which did honour to them both, and her vanity would have been flattered to see her friend's still-born works brought to life by the efforts of her secretary. The works themselves contained some excellent things, but so badly put that they were most tiresome to read. It is astonishing that the Abbé

[* Charles-Irénée Castel, abbé de Saint-Pierre (1658-1743), originator of various economic theories.]

de Saint-Pierre, who looked on his readers as his children, should nevertheless have addressed them as men, to judge by the small pains he took to make them listen to him. It was for that reason that this task had been proposed to me as useful in itself and something most suitable for a man who was industrious as a worker but idle in invention and who, since he found the pains of thinking most exhausting, preferred, if the subject were to his taste, to explain and promote the ideas of others rather than create anything new for himself. Besides, as I was not limiting myself to the part of translator, I was not prohibited from sometimes thinking for myself; and I could give such a shape to my work that many important truths might be slipped in under the cloak of the Abbé de Saint-Pierre much more happily than they could under mine. The task, however, was not easy, for it involved reading, considering, and selecting from twenty-three diffuse and muddled volumes full of boring passages, repetitions, and false or short-sighted views, out of which I had to fish some few that were fine and great and would give me courage to endure this painful labour. For my part, I was often ready to throw it up, if I could decently have withdrawn. But by receiving the Abbé's manuscripts, which were given to me by his nephew, the Count de Saint-Pierre, at the request of Saint-Lambert, I had in a sense pledged myself to make use of them, and I was under the obligation either to return them or to try and make something out of them. It was with the latter intention that I had brought the papers to the Hermitage, and that was the first work to which I intended to devote my leisure.

I was considering a third, the idea for which I had derived from some observations I had made upon myself, and I felt much encouraged to undertake it because I had reason to hope that if my treatment were worthy of the plan I had sketched, the book I should write would be truly useful to mankind – indeed one of the most useful that one could present to them. It has been observed that the majority of men are often in the course of their lives quite unlike themselves; they seem to be changed into quite different people. But it was not for the purpose of establishing so well known a fact that I planned to write my book; I had a more original and also more important purpose, which was to trace the causes of these changes, isolating those that depend on us in order to show how we may ourselves control them, and so become better men and more certain of ourselves. For it is, indisputably, more difficult for a decent man to resist the desires he should subdue, once they are formed, than to prevent, change, or

modify these same desires at their source, if he were in the position to go back so far. A man resists temptation once because he is strong, and succumbs on another occasion because he is weak, though if he had been in his previous state he would not have succumbed.

Looking within myself and seeking in others for the cause upon which these different states of being depended, I discovered that they had a great deal to do with our previous impressions from external objects, and that, being continually a little changed through the agency of our senses and our organs, we were unconsciously affected in our thoughts, our feelings, and even our actions by the impact of these slight changes upon us. Numerous striking examples that I had collected put the matter beyond all dispute; and thanks to their physical basis they seemed to me capable of providing an external code which, varied according to circumstances, could put or keep the mind in the state most conducive to virtue. From what errors would reason be preserved, and what vices would be choked even before birth, if one knew how to compel the brute functions to support that moral order which they so often disturb? Climates, seasons, sounds, colours, darkness, light, the elements, food, noise, silence, movement, repose: they all act on our machines, and consequently upon our souls, and they all offer us innumerable and almost certain opportunities for controlling those feelings which we allow to dominate us at their very onset. Such was the fundamental idea which I had already sketched out on paper and which I expected to have such an assured effect upon the nobility – who possess a sincere love of virtue and distrust their own weaknesses – that it seemed to me an easy task to put it into a book which would be as pleasant to read as it was to write. I made very little progress with this work, however, the title of which was *The Morals of Sensibility or The Wise Man's Materialism*.^{*} Distractions of which the cause will soon be clear took my attention away from it. As to the fate of my outline, which is more closely connected with my own fate than may appear, that will be revealed also.

Besides all this, I had been thinking for some time of a system of education which Mme de Chenonceaux, who was alarmed at her husband's methods with her son, had begged me to consider. The power of friendship caused this task, though in itself less to my taste, to occupy me more than all the rest. For this reason it is the only one of all the ideas I have just mentioned that I carried through. The ideal

^{*} *La Morale sensitive ou le Matérialisme du sage.*

that I set before myself as I worked should, I think, have earned its author a better fate. But let us not anticipate here on that sad subject. I shall be compelled to talk of it only too much in the continuation of this work.

All these various projects offered me subjects for reflection on my walks. For, as I think I have said, I can only meditate when I am walking. When I stop I cease to think; my mind only works with my legs. I had, however, taken the precaution of providing myself with an indoor task also for rainy days. This was my *Dictionary of Music*, the scattered, mutilated, and shapeless nature of which made it necessary for me to rewrite it almost entirely. I had brought a few books that I needed for that purpose, and had spent two months making extracts from many others which were lent me from the King's library, several of which I was even allowed to take with me to the Hermitage. This was material that I could put together in the house when the weather prevented my going out and I was tired of copying. This method suited me so well that I adopted it both at the Hermitage and at Montmorency, and afterwards also at Motiers, where I completed that book at the same time as I was writing others; I have always found a change of work to be a real relaxation.

I followed the arrangements I had laid out for myself fairly exactly for some time, and found it very satisfactory. But when the fine weather brought Mme d'Épinay rather more often to Épinay or to La Chevrette I found that courtesies, which had at first cost me nothing but which I had not reckoned on, very much upset my other activities. I have already said that Mme d'Épinay possessed most amiable qualities. She was very fond of her friends and most assiduous in her kindnesses to them; and since she spared neither time nor trouble on their behalf, she most certainly deserved that they should show her some attention in return. Hitherto I had performed that duty without thinking of it as such. But now I realized that I had hung a chain round my neck, and that only friendship had so far prevented me from feeling its weight, which I had made the heavier by my dislike of crowded receptions. Mme d'Épinay took advantage of this dislike to make me a proposition which appeared to be in my favour but which was even more favourable to her: that was to send me a message whenever she was alone or nearly so. I fell in with her idea without seeing what I was agreeing to. The consequence was that I no longer called on her at my convenience but at hers, and that I was never certain of being able to arrange for my own time on a single day. This tie

considerably diminished the pleasure I had hitherto taken in going to see her. I found that the liberty she had so lavishly promised me was only granted me on condition that I never made use of it; and on the one or two occasions when I tried to do so there were so many messages, so many notes, so many fears for my health, that I plainly saw there could be no excuse except my being confined to my bed for not running to her at her first bidding. I had to submit to this yoke; and this I did with a fairly good grace for one who so loathed dependence, my sincere attachment to her preventing me to a large extent from feeling the bond that went with it. In this way she more or less filled up the voids which the absence of her usual circle left in her round of entertainments. It was a very poor substitute for her, but it was better than downright loneliness, which she could not stand. However, she had a way of filling these voids very much more easily once she decided to try her hand at literature, and got the idea of throwing together novels and letters, comedies and stories, and other nonsense of that sort. But what pleased her was not so much the writing as the reading of them; and if she managed to scribble two or three consecutive pages she had to be sure of a favourable audience of two or three at least on the conclusion of her immense labour. I seldom had the honour of being one of the chosen unless someone else invited me. On my own I was generally reckoned a complete cipher in all respects; and that not only in Mme d'Épinay's society but in M. d'Holbach's too, and wherever Grimm set the tone. This insignificance suited me perfectly except when alone with her, when I did not know what posture to assume. I dared not talk of literature since I was not a competent judge of it, or of gallantry since I was too timid and feared to be laughed at as an old beau, more than I feared death. Besides, the idea never occurred to me in Mme d'Épinay's company, and would probably never have done so on a single occasion even if I had spent the whole of my life in her company; not that I felt any repugnance for her; on the contrary I probably loved her too well as a friend to be able to do so as a lover. I felt pleasure when I saw her and chatted with her. Her conversation, though pleasant enough in company, was dull in private; and mine, which was no more brilliant, was of no great assistance to her. Ashamed of the long silences, I strained every nerve to enliven the situation; and though I was often exhausted I was never bored. I was very glad to show her little attentions, and to give her the most fraternal of little kisses, which seemed to arouse her sensuality as little as they did mine; but that was all. She

was very thin, very fair, and with a chest as flat as my hand. That defect alone would have been enough to freeze me; for neither my heart nor my senses have ever been able to think of one without breasts as a woman; and other reasons which I have no need to mention* always caused me to forget her sex when with her.

Having thus resigned myself to an unavoidable servitude, I surrendered without resistance and found it, at least for the first year, less onerous than I should have expected. Mme d'Épinay usually spent almost the whole summer in the country, but she was only there for a part of that one, perhaps because business required her to stay longer in Paris, perhaps because Grimm's absence diminished her pleasure in living at La Chevrette. I profited by the intervals when she was not there or when she had a great many people with her, to enjoy my solitude with my good Thérèse and her mother so thoroughly as truly to appreciate its value. Although for some years I had fairly frequently gone into the country, I had hardly tasted its pleasures. Indeed my trips, generally made in the company of pretentious people and always ruined by a feeling of constraint, had merely whetted my appetite for rural delights; the closer the glimpse I got of them the more I felt the want of them. I was so tired of reception rooms, fountains, shrubberies, and flower-beds, and of those most tiresome people who made a show of them; I was so weary of pamphlets, clavichords, wool-sorting, and making knots, of stupid witticisms and tedious affectations, of tellers of little tales and great suppers, that when I spied a poor simple thorn bush, a hedge, a barn, or a meadow, when walking through a village I smelt a good chervil omelette, when I heard in the distance the rustic refrain of the goat-women's song, I consigned all rouge, flounces, and perfumes to the devil, and in my longing for the housewife's dinner and the local wine, I would gladly have slapped the faces of the chef and his master for making me dine at the hour I take my supper, and sup at the hour when I go to bed. But even more gladly would I have slapped the footmen who feasted their eyes on what I ate and compelled me, if I was not to die of thirst, to buy their master's doctored wine from them at ten times the price I should have had to pay for better drink at an inn.

Here I was then at last, at home in a pleasant and solitary retreat, at liberty to pass my days in this independent, unvarying, and peaceful life for which I felt I was born. Before I record the effect of this unprecedented state of things upon my heart I must recapitulate and tell

[* No doubt her affair with M. de Francueil, mentioned in Book Seven.]

once more of my secret affections, so that the effect of my new change of circumstances may be traced to its source.

I have always regarded the day which united me to my Thérèse as the one that determined my moral being. I needed an attachment, for the one that should have sufficed me had been so cruelly broken. The longing for happiness is never quenched in the heart of man. Mamma was ageing and deteriorating. I saw clearly that she could never be happy again on earth. I was left to seek a happiness of my own, having lost all hope of ever sharing hers. I drifted for some time from idea to idea, from plan to plan. My journey to Venice would have launched me into public life if the man with whom I tied myself up had possessed any commonsense. I am easily discouraged, particularly in difficult and lengthy enterprises. My failure in that one put me off all others; and since, following my old maxim, I looked on distant objectives as decoys for fools, I determined to live henceforth from day to day, and no longer saw anything in life that tempted me to strain after it.

It was at that precise moment that we came to know one another. That good girl's sweet nature seemed to me so well suited to my own that I joined myself to her in an attachment that has defied time and injuries. Indeed, every trial that might have broken it has only served to make it stronger. The strength of this attachment will appear in the sequel when I will reveal the wounds and heart-burnings which I suffered for her when my miseries were at their height, without a word of complaint to anyone ever passing my lips up to the moment of my writing these lines.

When it becomes known that after having made every effort and braved every danger in order not to be parted from her, after having lived with her for twenty-five years in defiance of fate and mankind, I finally married her in my old age, without any expectation or entreaties on her part or any engagement or promise on mine, it may be supposed that a mad passion turned my head from the first day and led me by degrees to this last extravagance: a hypothesis which will appear even more credible when the special and powerful reasons are known which should have prevented me from ever reaching that point. What will the reader think when I tell him, with all the sincerity that he has come to expect of me, that from the first moment I saw her till this day I have never felt the least glimmering of love for her; that I no more desired to possess her than I had desired Mme de Warens, and that the sensual needs I satisfied with her were for me

purely sexual and had nothing to do with her as an individual? He will believe that I was not made like other men, and that I was incapable of feeling love, since love did not enter into the feelings that attached me to the woman who has been dearest to me. Patience, my dear reader, the fatal moment is approaching when you will be only too rudely undeceived.

I am repeating myself, and I know it; but it is necessary. The first, the greatest, the strongest, the most inextinguishable of all my needs was entirely one of the heart. It was the need for intimate companionship, for a companionship as intimate as possible, which was the chief reason why I needed a woman rather than a man, a woman friend rather than a man friend. This singular need was such that the most intimate physical union could not fulfil it; only two souls in the same body would have sufficed. Failing that, I always felt a void. I believed that the moment had come when I should feel it no longer. This young person who had so many qualities to make her lovable – even good looks at that time – and was without a trace of artifice or coquetry, would have absorbed my whole existence within herself if I could have absorbed hers in me, as I had hoped. I had nothing to fear so far as other men were concerned. I am sure that I am the only one she has truly loved, and so cool are her passions that she has seldom felt the want of a man even when I have ceased to be one for her in that respect. Unlike myself, she had a family, every member of which so differed from her in character that it was impossible for me to adopt them as my own. Therein lay the first cause of my misfortunes. What would I not have given to be a son to her mother? I did all I could to that end, but I never succeeded. It was in vain that I tried to unite all our interests; it was impossible. Mme Le Vasseur always set up interests that differed from mine, that were opposite to mine, and even to her daughter's, which were already inseparable from mine. She and her other children and grandchildren became so many blood-suckers, and the least injury they did to Thérèse was to steal from her. The poor girl, accustomed to give in, even to her nieces, allowed herself to be robbed and ordered about without saying a word; and I saw to my distress that though I lavished money and advice upon her I could do nothing to help her. I tried to get her away from her mother; she always resisted. I respected her reluctance and esteemed her the more for it, but her refusal was none the less harmful to her interests and mine. In the power of her mother and her family, she was more theirs than mine, belonged to them more than to herself. Their greed

was ruinous to her, but even more pernicious was their advice. In short, if thanks to her love for me and her own good character she was not completely their slave, she was so at least to the extent that the good principles I endeavoured to instil into her were largely deprived of their effect, and that never mind what efforts I made to overcome it, we always remained separate people.

So it was that in a sincere and mutual attachment into which I put all the affection of my heart, the void in that heart was nevertheless never really filled. Children came, who might have filled it; but that made things even worse. I trembled at the thought of entrusting them to that badly brought-up family, to be brought up even more badly. The risks of their upbringing by the Foundling Hospital were considerably less. This reason for the course I adopted was stronger than all those I set out in my letter to Mme de Francueil. It was, however, the only one that I dared not tell. I preferred to be less completely absolved from so grave a charge and so spare the family of the woman I loved. But it can be judged by the conduct of her wretched brother whether, whatever may be said on the subject, I should have been right in exposing my children to the risk of receiving an education like this.

Being unable to taste to the full the intimate companionship of which I felt the need, I looked for something in addition, which would not fill the void but which would make me less conscious of it. Lacking a single friend who would be entirely mine, I required friends whose energies would overcome my inertia. It was for this reason that I cultivated and strengthened my relationship with Diderot and the Abbé de Condillac, that I entered into new and even more intimate relationship with Grimm, and that in the end, through that unlucky essay, the story of which I have told, I found myself unexpectedly thrown back into literature, which I thought I had abandoned for ever.

These fresh beginnings led me by a new path into a different intellectual world, possessing a simple and dignified economy which I could not look upon without enthusiasm. Soon, as I continued to explore it, I could see only foolishness and error in the doctrines of our sages, nothing but oppression and misery in our social order. Deluded by my stupid conceit, I thought that I was born to destroy all these deceits; and judging that in order to gain a hearing I must reconcile my actions to my principles, I adopted that singular course which I have not been allowed to pursue, and which my pretended friends

have never been able to pardon, since it set an example which at first made me ridiculous, but which would finally have earned me respect if it had been possible for me to persevere with it.

Until then I had been good; from that moment I became virtuous, or at least intoxicated with virtue. This intoxication had begun in my head, but it had passed to my heart. The noblest pride sprang up there on the ruins of uprooted vanity. I played no part; I became indeed what I appeared; and for the four years at least that this exhilaration lasted in its full strength there was nothing great or beautiful that can enter into the heart of man, between earth and heaven, of which I was not capable. This was the origin of my sudden eloquence, and of the truly celestial fire which burned in me and spread to my early books, a fire which had not emitted the tiniest spark in forty years, because it was not yet kindled.

I was truly transformed; my friends and acquaintances no longer recognized me. I had ceased to be that shy creature, who was shame-faced rather than modest and who had not the courage to show himself or even to speak. I had ceased to be a man who was put out by a joking word and blushed at a woman's glance. Bold, proud, and fearless, I now carried with me wherever I went a self-assurance which owed its firmness to its simplicity and which dwelt in my soul rather than in my outward bearing. The contempt which my deep reflections had inspired in me for the customs, the principles, and the prejudices of my age made me insensible to the mockery of those who followed them; and I crushed their little witticisms with my observations, as I might crush an insect between my fingers. What a change! All Paris repeated the sharp and biting sarcasms of that same man who two years before – and again ten years afterwards – could never find the right thing to say or the right word to use. No state of being could be found on earth more contrary to my true nature than this one. If ever there was a moment in my life in which I became another man and ceased to be myself, it was at the time I am speaking of. But instead of lasting six days or six weeks it lasted nearly six years, and would have endured to this day but for the particular circumstances that put an end to it and restored me to Nature, out of whose realm I had been trying to soar.

This change began as soon as I left Paris and the sight of that great city's vices ceased to feed the indignation it aroused in me. When men were out of my sight I ceased to despise them; when the wicked were no more to be seen I ceased to hate them. My heart, which was not

made for hatred, only caused me to deplore their wretchedness, and did not single out the part their wickedness played in it. This milder but far less exalted state of mind soon tempered the burning enthusiasm which had carried me away for so long; and imperceptibly, almost without observing it myself, I became fearful and shy once more – in a word I was the same Jean-Jacques as I had been before.

If this revolution had done no more than restore me to myself and had stopped there, all would have been well. But unfortunately it did go further, and carried me rapidly to the opposite extreme. From that time my soul has been in a state of disturbance, and has enjoyed only a passing moment's equilibrium. For its perpetual oscillations have prevented its ever holding to its true line. Let us begin to describe this second revolution, a terrible and fatal epoch in a life unparalleled among human kind.

Since there were but three of us in our retreat, leisure and solitude were naturally bound to increase our intimacy, and they did so in the case of Thérèse and myself. Alone together beneath the trees, we spent delightful hours that I had never found so sweet before; and she too seemed to me to enjoy them better than ever in the past. She opened her heart to me without reserve, and told me things about her mother and her family that she had been strong-minded enough to conceal from me for some time. Mme Le Vasseur and the others had accepted great numbers of presents from Mme Dupin, which had been intended for me but which that cunning old woman, to save me from annoyance, had appropriated for herself and her other children without leaving anything for Thérèse and strictly forbidding her to mention the matter to me: a command which the poor girl had obeyed with a submissiveness that was almost past belief.

But one thing which surprised me much more was to learn that, in addition to the frequent private conversations that Diderot and Grimm had held with both mother and daughter for the purpose of detaching them from me – conversations, which thanks to Thérèse's resistance had led to nothing, – the pair of them had subsequently had a number of secret discussions with the mother alone, without Thérèse being able to find out what it was they were brewing amongst them. She only knew that little presents had played some part in it, and that there had been various minor comings and goings which they tried to keep from her, and the reasons for which were entirely unknown to her. When we left Paris Mme Le Vasseur had been for a long time in the habit of going to see M. Grimm two or three times a month,

and of spending some hours with him in conversation so secret that Grimm's manservant was always sent out of the room.

I concluded that the motive behind all this was none other than the old scheme into which they had tried to inveigle the daughter, by promising to procure them through Mme d'Épinay's influence a salt-livelihood or a tobacco shop, by tempting them, that is, with the lure of gain. They had put it to them that I was not only incapable of doing anything for them, but on account of them could not even do anything for myself. As I saw nothing in all this that was not good in intention I could not really take it in bad part. The only thing about it that disgusted me was the mystery-mongering, particularly on the part of the old woman who, in addition, became every day more fawning and more wheedling in her attitude to me; which did not prevent her from ceaselessly scolding her daughter in private for being too fond of me, for telling me everything, for being nothing but a fool, and for being about to become a dupe.

That woman possessed to a supreme degree the art of running with the hare and riding with the hounds, of hiding from one party what she received from another, and from me what she received from them all. I might have forgiven her greed, but I could not forgive her deceptions. What could she have to conceal from me, from me whose happiness, as she knew so well, depended almost solely on her daughter's happiness and her own? What I had done for her daughter I had done for myself. But what I had done for her deserved some recognition on her part. She ought to have been grateful for it, at least to her daughter, and have loved me out of love of Thérèse, who loved me. I had rescued her from utter poverty, she owed her subsistence to me, and to me she owed all the acquaintances whom she was putting to such good use. Thérèse had for long supported her by her work, and was now feeding her with my bread. She owed everything to this daughter, for whom she had done nothing; and her other children, to whom she had given dowries, for whom she had ruined herself, far from helping to keep their mother, still devoured her substance and mine. I considered that under the circumstances she should regard me as her sole friend and most reliable protector, and that, instead of keeping me in the dark about matters that concerned me and plotting against me in my own house, she should inform me faithfully about anything of any importance to me, as soon as she learnt of it and before I did. In what light, then, could I view her false and secretive behaviour? What was I to think, furthermore, of the attitude she

strove to inculcate into Thérèse? How monstrous must have been her ingratitude when she sought to instil it into her daughter?

All these reflections finally alienated my affections from this woman to such a degree that I could no longer look at her without contempt. However I never ceased to treat the mother of my partner with respect and to show her, in almost every way, the attentions and consideration of a son. But it is true that I never cared to stay long in her company; for it is hardly in me to subject myself to restraint.

Here is another of these brief moments in my life when I have seen happiness close at hand without being able to attain it and without its being my fault that I have missed it. If Mme Le Vasseur had been a good woman we could have been happy, all three, to the end of our days, and the only one to be pitied would have been the last of us to survive. Instead, you will watch the march of events and judge whether I could have stayed it.

Seeing that I had gained ground in her daughter's affections while she had lost, Mme Le Vasseur struggled to recover her position and, instead of drawing closer to me through Thérèse, tried to alienate her daughter from me altogether. One of the means she employed was to call her family to her aid. I had begged Thérèse not to let any of them come to the Hermitage; and she had given me her promise. They were sent for in my absence, and she was not consulted. After the first step all the rest were easy. When once one has kept one matter secret from the person one loves, very soon one has hardly any scruples in keeping everything from him. As soon as I was at La Chevrette the Hermitage was full of people who enjoyed themselves quite a bit. A mother has always a strong influence on a daughter who is good-natured. Nevertheless, however hard the old woman tried, she could never win Thérèse round to her point of view or bring her into the conspiracy against me. But Mme Le Vasseur committed herself irrevocably; and seeing on one side her daughter and myself, with whom she could live and no more, and on the other Diderot, Grimm, d'Holbach, and Mme d'Épinay, who made her large promises and gave her something, she reckoned that no one could go far wrong in the company of a farmer-general and a baron. If I had had better eyes I should have seen from that moment that I was harbouring a snake in my bosom. But such was my blind confidence, which nothing had yet affected, that I did not even conceive of a person's harming someone he ought to love. While I saw a thousand plots spun all round me, all I found to complain of was the tyranny of those I called my friends,

who were trying, as I thought, to force me to be happy in their way rather than in mine.

Although Thérèse refused to enter into a league with her mother she once more kept her secret. Her motive was praiseworthy. I will not say whether she did right or wrong. Two women who share a secret like to chatter about it. This brought them closer together, and Thérèse by dividing her loyalty sometimes left me feeling that I was alone. For I could no longer count the relationship we formed when all together as society. It was then that I felt acutely how wrong I had been, during our early intimacy, not to profit by the pliability which her love had inspired in her, to bring out her talents and give her knowledge which would have drawn us closer together in our retreat, pleasantly filled up her time and mine, and prevented the moments when we were alone together from ever hanging heavy on our hands. It was not that conversation dried up between us, or that she seemed to be bored during our walks; but we had not sufficient ideas in common to make any great store. We could no longer talk incessantly about our plans, for now they were limited to that of enjoying ourselves. The objects that came into view inspired me with reflections beyond her understanding. A twelve-year-old affection had no more need of words. We knew one another too well to have anything fresh to say. The only resources left us were trivialities, scandal, and bad puns. It is particularly in solitude that one feels the advantage of living with someone who can think. I had no need of this resource to delight in her company, but she required it if she were always to delight in mine. The worst of it was that even then we had to snatch our times together; her mother, who had grown tiresome to me, forced me to watch out for them. I was under constraint in my own house, that is the whole story; the atmosphere of love spoilt a simple friendship. Our relationship was intimate but we did not live in intimacy.

As soon as I thought I saw Thérèse sometimes looking for excuses to escape the walks I suggested, I ceased to suggest any, without feeling at all annoyed with her for not enjoying them as much as I. Pleasure is not a thing that depends on the will. I was certain of her love, and that satisfied me. When my pleasures were hers I enjoyed them with her; when they were not I put her happiness before mine.

Thus it was that, half deceived in my expectations, leading a life after my own heart in a place of my choice with a person who was dear to me, I nevertheless managed to feel almost isolated. What I

lacked prevented my enjoying what I had. Where happiness and enjoyment were concerned, I needed all or nothing. It will be clear later why I have felt it necessary to make this explanation. Now I will resume the thread of my story.

I believed that the manuscripts which the Count de Saint-Pierre had given me were so many treasures. When I examined them I saw that they were little more than the collection of his uncle's printed works, annotated and corrected by his hand, with a few little pieces in addition that had never been published. His moral writings confirmed me in the opinion I had formed on some of his letters which Mme de Créqui had shown me, that he had much more intelligence than I had previously imagined. But a thorough examination of his political works showed me only superficial views, and plans useful enough but impracticable owing to one idea from which the author could never escape, that men are motivated by their intelligence rather than by their passions. The high opinion he had of modern learning had led him into adopting a false belief in perfected wisdom, which was the basis of all the institutions he proposed and the source of all his political sophistries. This rare man, an ornament to his age and to his kind – the only man, perhaps, in all the history of the human race whose only passion was the passion for reason – nevertheless only advanced from error to error in all his systems, because he wished to make all men like himself instead of taking them as they are and as they will continue to be. Whilst thinking that he was working for his contemporaries he was in fact labouring for creatures of his imagination.

All this considered, I was in some doubt as to what form I was to give to my work. If I were to allow my author his visions I should be doing no useful service. Were I to refute them vigorously I should be acting dishonourably because my possession of the manuscripts, which I had accepted and even asked for, put me under the obligation of treating the author kindly. In the end I took the line that seemed the most honest, the most judicious, and the most useful. This was to give the author's views and my own separately and, with this object, to enter into his views, explain them and extend them, and spare no pains to show them off at their best.

My work, therefore, had to be made up of two absolutely separate parts, one intended to display the author's various schemes in the way I have just described, while in the other, which was not intended to appear until the first had had its effect, I should have delivered my own

judgement on those same schemes, which, I admit, would have meant exposing them at times to the treatment of the sonnet in *Le Misanthrope*.* As an introduction to the whole work there was to be a life of the author, for which I had collected some fairly good material which I flattered myself I should not spoil by my treatment. I had occasionally seen the Abbé de Saint-Pierre in his old age; and the respect I had for his memory guaranteed me that, on the whole, the Count would not be displeased with the way I treated his relative.

I tried my hand out on the *Perpetual Peace*,† the most considerable and the most elaborate of all the works in his collection; and before going over to my own reflections I had the courage to read absolutely all that the Abbé had written on this great subject, without ever being put off by his prolixity or his repetitions. The public has seen the selection I took from it, so I have nothing more to say. As for my judgement of it, it has not been printed, and I do not know whether it ever will be; but it was made at the same time as the selection. I went on from that to the *Polysynody*,‡ or plurality of Councils, a work which he had written in the Regent's time to support the form of administration he had introduced, and which had led to the Abbé's expulsion from the French Academy for some shafts against the preceding administration, which annoyed the Duchess de Maine and the Cardinal de Polignac. I finished this work in the same way as the preceding one, made my selection, and wrote my judgement; but I stopped there, unwilling to continue with an enterprise I should never have embarked on.

The reflection which made me abandon the project occurred to me spontaneously, and it is astonishing that it had not occurred earlier. The majority of the Abbé de Saint-Pierre's writings were, or contained, critical observations upon certain features of the government of France, and some of them were so outspoken that he was lucky not to have got into trouble. But in ministerial offices the Abbé de Saint-Pierre had always been regarded as a kind of preacher rather than as a true politician, and they let him say just what he pleased because it was well known that nobody listened to him. If I had succeeded in gaining him a hearing the case would have been different. He was a Frenchman, I was not; and by venturing to repeat his criticisms, even over his signature, I was taking the risk of being asked, rather roughly but not unjustly, what all this had to do with me. Fortunately, before

[* Which was submitted to devastating criticism in Molière's play.]

† *La Paix perpétuelle*.

‡ *Polysynodie*.

going any further I saw what a hold I should be giving them over me and very speedily retired. I knew that, living alone in the midst of men – and of men all more powerful than myself – I could not protect myself, whatever I did, from any injury they might choose to do me. There was only one course of action that I could take: to behave in such a way that if they chose to injure me they should at least be in the wrong. This principle, which led me to abandon the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, has often made me renounce projects that have been far dearer to me. Those people who are always ready to construe adversity into crime would be very surprised if they knew all the pains I have taken in my life to prevent anyone's having the excuse for saying to me in my misfortunes: 'That served you right.'

The relinquishing of this work left me for some time uncertain of what should be my next project; and this period of idleness was my undoing, for it led me to turn my reflections on myself, through lack of any external object to occupy them. I had no longer any scheme for the future with which to entertain my imagination. It was not even possible for me to invent one, since my present situation was precisely the one which fulfilled all my desires at once. I could not conceive of anything more to wish, and yet my heart was empty. My state indeed was all the more cruel because I could see none that I should prefer to it. I had concentrated all my tenderest affections upon a person after my own heart, who returned them.

My life with her was unconstrained and, as you might say, subject to no conditions. Nevertheless I was never free from a secret heart-ache, whether I was with her or away from her. When I possessed her I felt that she was still not mine; and the single idea that I was not everything to her caused her to be almost nothing to me.

I had friends of both sexes to whom I was attached by the purest of friendship and the most perfect of respect. I counted on a genuine reciprocation on their part, and it never once occurred to me to doubt their sincerity. These friendships, however, were more of a pain than a pleasure to me owing to my friends' obstinate, or even perverse, habit of opposing all my tastes, my inclinations, and my way of life to such an extent that I had only to appear to want something affecting myself alone, and in no way depending on them, for me to find them all immediately banded together to compel me to renounce it. Their stubborn attempts to control me in my every whim were all the more unfair because, far from opposing theirs, I did not even find out what they were. It became, however, so cruelly burdensome to me

that in the end I never received a letter from any of them without feeling, as I opened it, a certain alarm which was only too well justified by the contents. I felt that for people all younger than myself and all standing in great need themselves of the advice they lavished on me, they were treating me too much like a child. 'Love me', I said to them, 'as I love you. Otherwise do not interfere in my affairs any more than I interfere in yours. That is all that I ask of you.' If they conceded one of my two demands it certainly was not the second.

I had a retired dwelling-place in a charming solitude, and there I could live after my own fashion without requiring anyone to control me. This dwelling-place imposed on me, however, duties which were pleasant to fulfil but which could not be ignored. My whole liberty was no more than precarious. I was in a state of greater subjection than if I had been under orders because I had to submit of my own free will. I had not a single day on which I could say as I got up: 'This day I will spend just as I please.' Besides being dependent on Mme d'Épinay's arrangements I was still more tiresomely subject to the public and chance visitors. My distance from Paris did not prevent crowds of idle people who had no idea what to do with their time from coming every day to waste mine quite unscrupulously. Without the least warning I found myself pitilessly assailed, and scarcely did I make a pleasant plan for my day that I did not have it upset by some caller. In short, amidst the blessings I had most eagerly desired, I found no pure enjoyment, and I turned my thoughts back by fits and starts to the clear skies of my youth, exclaiming to myself sometimes with a sigh: 'Ah, this is not what life was like at Les Charmettes!'

Recollection of the different periods in my life led me to reflect on the point I had now reached, and I found myself already in my declining years a prey to painful afflictions. I believed that I was approaching the end of my days almost without having tasted to the full any of the pleasures for which my heart thirsted, without having given vent to the strong emotions which I felt it had in reserve, without having even tasted that intoxicating passion, the power of which I felt in my soul – a passion which, through lack of an object, was always suppressed and could express itself in no other way but through my sighs.

How could it be that, with a naturally expansive nature for which to live was to love, I had not hitherto found a friend entirely my own, a true friend – I who felt so truly formed to be a friend? How could it be that with such inflammable feelings, with a heart entirely moulded for love, I had not at least once burned with love for a definite object?

Devoured by a need to love that I had never been able to satisfy, I saw myself coming to the gates of old age, and dying without having lived.

These melancholy but moving reflections drove me back upon myself with a regret that was not without its own pleasure. It seemed to me that fate owed me something she had never given me. To what purpose had she sent me into the world with delicate faculties, if they were to remain to the end unused? This consciousness of my internal worth gave me a feeling of injustice, which afforded me some form of compensation and caused me to weep tears that pleased me as they flowed.

I was meditating on this subject in the finest season of the year, in the month of June, beneath cool groves, to the song of the nightingale and the murmuring of the streams. Everything combined to plunge me once more into that too seductive indolence to which I was naturally inclined, but from which I ought to have been delivered for ever by the firm and austere state of mind that my long inner ferment had just brought me to. Unfortunately I started remembering the dinner at the Château de Toune and my meeting with those two charming girls, at the same season and in country more or less similar to the country I was in at that moment. This memory, which was the sweeter for the innocence associated with it, recalled others of the same kind to me. Soon I saw all around me the persons I had felt emotion for in my youth: Mlle Galley, Mlle de Graffenried, Mlle de Breil, Mme Basile, Mme de Larnage, my pretty music pupils, and even the enticing Giulietta, whom my heart can never forget. I saw myself surrounded by a seraglio of houris, by my old acquaintances a strong desire for whom was no new sensation to me. My blood caught fire, my head turned despite its grey hairs, and there was the grave citizen of Geneva, the austere Jean-Jacques at almost forty-five, suddenly become once more the love-sick swain. The intoxication that seized me, although so sudden and so foolish, was so strong and lasting that it took nothing less than the unforeseen and terrible crisis it brought upon me to cure me of it.

Whatever the intensity of this intoxication, however, it was not sufficient to make me forget my age and situation, to flatter me that I could still arouse love, or to make me try at last to communicate this devouring but barren flame by which ever since my childhood I had felt my heart to be consumed in vain. I had no hope of this, nor did I even desire it. I knew that the time for love was past. I was too conscious of the ridicule heaped upon aged beaux to incur it myself.

I was not the man to become presumptuous and over-confident in my declining years, after having been so little so in my prime. Besides, being a peaceable man, I should have been too frightened of domestic storms; and I loved Thérèse too sincerely to expose her to the grief of seeing me carried away by other and stronger feelings than those she inspired in me.

What then did I do? My reader has already guessed, if he has paid the least attention to my progress so far. The impossibility of attaining the real persons precipitated me into the land of chimeras; and seeing nothing that existed worthy of my exalted feelings, I fostered them in an ideal world which my creative imagination soon peopled with beings after my own heart. Never was this resource more opportune, and never did it prove more fertile. In my continual ecstasies I intoxicated myself with draughts of the most exquisite sentiments that have ever entered the heart of a man. Altogether ignoring the human race, I created for myself societies of perfect creatures celestial in their virtue and in their beauty, and of reliable, tender, and faithful friends such as I had never found here below. I took such pleasure in thus soaring into the empyrean in the midst of all the charms that surrounded me, that I spent countless hours and days at it, losing all memory of anything else. No sooner had I eaten a hasty morsel than I was impatient to escape and run into my woods once more. When I was about to set out for my enchanted world and saw wretched mortals appearing to hold me down to earth, I could neither restrain nor conceal my annoyance. Indeed I lost control of myself and gave them so rude a reception that it might almost have been called brutal. This merely increased my reputation for misanthropy, whereas it would have gained me quite a contrary one if people had been more able to read my heart.

At the supreme height of my exaltation I was suddenly pulled down, like a kite on a string, and restored to my place by Nature by the agency of a fairly sharp attack of my complaint. I used the only remedy which afforded me any relief, the catheters, and they put a stop to my celestial amours. For not only is one seldom in love when in pain, but my imagination, which only thrives in the country and under trees, languishes and dies in a room beneath the rafters of a ceiling. I have often regretted that dryads do not exist; for among them I should assuredly have found an object for my love.

Other domestic upsets came simultaneously to increase my annoyances. Mme Le Vasseur paid me the prettiest compliments in the

■

world, but alienated her daughter from me in every way she could. I received letters from my old neighbourhood informing me that the good old woman had behind my back incurred several debts in Thérèse's name. Thérèse had known this, but she had not told me of it. The payment of the debts annoyed me much less than the secret that had been made of them. How could a woman from whom I had never kept a secret keep one from me? Can one hide things from the person one loves? The Holbach circle, who saw that I never came to Paris, began to be positively afraid that I enjoyed the country and might be fool enough to stay there. Then began those intrigues, the object of which was to get me back to the city by indirect means. Diderot, who did not want to show his own hand so soon, began by detaching Deleyre from me, whom I had just introduced to him. Deleyre received and handed on to me such thoughts as Diderot chose to impart to him, without perceiving the real purpose of it all.

Everything seemed to combine to arouse me from my sweet and foolish reverie. I had not recovered from my attack when I received a copy of the poem on the destruction of Lisbon which I supposed to have been sent me by the author. This put me under the obligation of writing to him and speaking of his play, which I did in a letter that was printed a long time afterwards, without my consent, as will be told hereafter.

Struck by seeing that poor man, weighed down, so to speak, by fame and prosperity, bitterly complaining, nevertheless, against the wretchedness of this life and finding everything invariably bad, I formed the insane plan of bringing him back to himself and proving to him that all was well. Though Voltaire has always appeared to believe in God, he has really only believed in the Devil, because his so-called God is nothing but a malicious being who, according to his belief, only takes pleasure in doing harm. The absurdity of this doctrine leaps to the eye, and it is particularly revolting in a man loaded with every kind of blessing who, living in the lap of luxury, seeks to disillusion his fellow-men by a frightening and cruel picture of all the calamities from which he is himself exempt. I who had a better right to count up and weigh the evils of human life, examined them impartially and proved to him that there was not one of all those evils that could be blamed on Providence, not one that has not its source rather in the misuse that man has made of his faculties than in Nature herself. I treated him in that letter with all the deference, consideration, and circumspection possible, indeed I think with the utmost

respect. However, since I knew that his vanity was most easily offended, I did not send it straight to him but to Doctor Tronchin, his physician and friend, giving him full authority to pass it on or destroy it, whichever should seem to him the better course. Tronchin gave him the letter, and Voltaire replied to me in a few lines that, being both an invalid and a sick-nurse himself, he would postpone his answer till another time. He did not say a word on the subject I had raised. Tronchin, in forwarding this note to me, added one of his own in which he expressed scant respect for the man who had passed it to him.

I have never published or even shown these two letters, since I have no desire to parade little triumphs of this kind; but the originals of these are in my collection (Packet A, Nos. 20 and 21). In the meantime Voltaire has published the reply that he promised me. It is nothing less than his novel *Candide*, of which I cannot speak because I have not read it.

All these distractions should have worked a radical cure for my fantastic amours, and this was perhaps a means offered me by Heaven for preventing their fatal consequences. But my unlucky star prevailed, and no sooner did I begin to recover than my heart, my head and my feet resumed the same paths. I say the same, but only in certain respects; for my ideas were a little less exalted and this time remained upon earth. But they made so exquisite a choice among all the charming things of every kind that could be found there that it was not much less chimerical than the chimerical world I had deserted. I imagined love and friendship, the two idols of my heart, in the most ravishing of forms, and took delight in adorning them with all the charms of the sex I had always adored. I imagined two women friends, rather than two of my own sex, since although examples of such friendships are rarer they are also more beautiful. I endowed them with analogous but different characters; with features if not perfect yet to my taste, and radiant with kindness and sensibility. I made one dark, the other fair; one lively, the other gentle; one sensible, the other weak, but so touching in her weakness that virtue itself seemed to gain by it. I gave one of them a lover to whom the other was a tender friend and even something more; but I allowed of no rivalry or quarrels or jealousy because I find it hard to imagine any painful feelings, and I did not wish to discolour my charming picture with anything degrading to Nature. Being captivated by my two charming models, I identified myself as far as I could with the lover and

friend. But I made him young and pleasant, whilst endowing him also with the virtues and faults that I felt in myself.

In order to place my characters in a suitable setting, I passed the loveliest places I had seen in my travels one after another in review. But I found no woodland fresh enough, no countryside moving enough to suit me. The valleys of Thessaly would have satisfied me, if I had seen them; but my imagination was tired of inventing, and wanted some real locality to serve as a basis, and to create for the inhabitants I intended to place there the illusion of real existence. I thought for some time of the Borromean Islands, the delicious sight of which had enraptured me; but I found too much ornament and artifice about them for my inhabitants. I needed a lake, however, and finally I chose that lake around which my heart has never ceased to wander. I fixed on that part of its shores, which my wishes long ago chose as my dwelling-place in that imaginary state of bliss which is all that fate has allowed me. My poor Mamma's birthplace had still a special attraction for me. Its contrasting features, the richness and variety of its landscape, the magnificence and majesty of the whole, which charms the senses, moves the heart, and elevates the soul, finally determined me, and I established my young pupils at Vevey. That is as much as I imagined at the first inspiration; the rest was only added subsequently.

I confined myself for a long time to so vague a plan because it was sufficient to fill my imagination with pleasant objects, and my heart with those feelings on which it loves to feed. This fiction, by constant repetition, finally assumed greater consistency and took a fixed and definite shape in my brain. It was then that the whim seized me to set down on paper some of the situations that it suggested to me and, by recalling all that I had felt in my youth, to give some sort of expression to my desire to love which I had never been able to satisfy, and which I now felt was devouring me.

At first I jotted down a few scattered letters, unrelated to one another and in no sequence; and when I made up my mind to connect them I was often in considerable trouble. What is almost incredible but is nevertheless a fact is that the first two parts were written almost entirely in this manner, without my having any well-formed plan or even foreseeing that one day I should be tempted to make a regular work of it. Thus it can be seen these two parts, made up after the event of material which was not shaped for the position it occupies, are full of verbal padding, which is not to be found in the other parts.

At the height of my reveries I received a visit from Mme d'Houdetot, the first she had made me in all her life, but unfortunately not the last, as will be seen hereafter. The Countess d'Houdetot was the daughter of the late M. de Bellegarde, a farmer-general, and sister of M. d'Épinay, of M. de Lalive, and of M. de La Briche, who have since both been made ambassadorial attachés.* I have spoken of my acquaintance with her when she was a girl. Since her marriage I had only seen her at the parties at La Chevrette and at her sister-in-law's, Mme d'Épinay. Having often spent several days in her company, at La Chevrette or at Épinay, not only did I always find her very pleasant, but she seemed also well disposed towards me. She was rather fond of taking walks with me; we were both walkers, and conversation did not flag between us. However, I never went to call on her in Paris, although she asked me and even pressed me to do so on several occasions. Her intimacy with M. de Saint-Lambert, with whom I was beginning to be on close terms, made her still more interesting to me; and it was to bring me news of that friend, who was, I think, at Mahon at the time, that she came to see me at the Hermitage.

This visit had somewhat the appearance of the beginning of a romance. She lost her way. Her coachman left the road at a bend and tried to drive straight across from the mill at Clairvaux to the Hermitage. Her carriage stuck in the mud at the bottom of the valley, and she decided to get out and go the rest of the way on foot. Her thin shoes were soon wet through, she sank in the mire, and her servants had infinite trouble in getting her out. Finally, she arrived at the Hermitage in a pair of boots, making the air ring with her laughter in which I joined when I saw her coming. She had to change all her clothes; Thérèse provided clean ones, and I persuaded her to forget her dignity and join us in a country meal, which she very much enjoyed. It was late and she did not stay long; but our meeting was so gay that she was quite delighted and seemed inclined to come again. She did not carry out her intention, however, till the next year. But, alas, this delay did nothing to save me.

I spent the autumn in an occupation that no one would expect, protecting M. d'Épinay's fruit. The Hermitage was the reservoir for the park waters of La Chevrette, and it had a walled garden planted with espaliers and other trees, which provided M. d'Épinay with more fruit than his La Chevrette kitchen-garden, even though three-

[* Persons whose duty it was to conduct ambassadors and foreign princes to Royal audiences.]

quarters of it was stolen. So as not to be an absolutely useless guest, I undertook the management of the garden and the supervision of the gardeners. All went well until the fruit season; but as it grew ripe I saw that it disappeared, a fact that I could not account for. The gardener assured me that it was the dormice that were eating it all. I waged war against the dormice and destroyed many of them, but the fruit went on disappearing all the same. So carefully did I watch that in the end I discovered the gardener himself to be the chief dormouse. He lodged at Montmorency, but came over every night with his wife and children to pick up the stored fruit he had laid up during the day, and put them up for public sale in the Paris market just as if he had possessed a garden of his own. This wretch, whom I had loaded with kindnesses, whose children Thérèse used to clothe, and whose father, who was a beggar, I almost supported, stole from us with equal ease and effrontery, none of the three of us being vigilant enough to put a stop to it, and in a single night he succeeded in emptying my cellar, which I found entirely pillaged next morning. So long as he seemed to be reserving his attentions for me, I put up with it all, but as I wished to account for the fruit I had to denounce the thief. Mme d'Épinay asked me to pay him and discharge him, and look for another gardener; which is what I did. As that great rogue prowled round the Hermitage every night, armed with a huge iron-tipped stick that looked like a club, and followed by other vagabonds of his own kind, in order to reassure the *bosses*, who were frightened of this terrible man, I made his successor sleep every night at the Hermitage. But as they were still not easy in their minds, I sent to Mme d'Épinay for a gun which I put in the gardener's room, instructing him only to employ it at need if anyone tried to force the door or climb into the garden, and only to use a powder charge, solely in order to frighten the thieves. This was surely the least precaution a man in poor health could have taken for the common good, when he had to spend the winter deep in the woods, alone with two nervous women. Lastly, I acquired a little dog to act as a sentinel.

I told my story to Deleyre, who came to see me during this time, and laughed with him over my military preparations. On his return to Paris he tried to amuse Diderot by passing the tale on to him; and that is how the Holbach circle learnt that I seriously meant to spend the winter at the Hermitage. This determination, which they could never have imagined, quite threw them out; and in the meantime, until they could invent some fresh intrigue to make my life there

unpleasant,* they alienated this same Deleyre from me, through Diderot's agency. For Deleyre, having first of all found my precautions quite understandable, ended by finding them inconsistent with my principles and worse than ridiculous. He wrote me some letters in which he described them as such, and poured sarcastic jokes upon me, biting enough to offend me if I had been in a mood to take offence. But being at that time bathed in affectionate and tender emotions and susceptible to no others I saw nothing in his bitter sarcasms but attempts at fun, and found him merely jocose when anyone else would have thought him crazy. So on this occasion the men who prompted him wasted their energies, and I spent my winter undisturbed.

By dint of care and vigilance I succeeded in protecting the garden so well that although the crop almost failed that season the yield was three times as great as in the previous year. Certainly I spared no pains to safeguard it. I went so far as to accompany the consignments which I sent to La Chevette and Épinay, and even to carry some baskets myself. I remember that Thérèse and I carried one so heavy that, to save ourselves from collapsing under its weight, we had to rest every ten steps, and arrived bathed in sweat.

1757 When bad weather began to confine me to my house, I tried to resume my indoor occupations; I found it impossible. I saw nothing anywhere but the two charming girl friends, their man, their surroundings, and the country they lived in, nothing but objects created or embellished for them by my imagination. I was no longer master of myself even for a moment, the delirium never left me. After many vain efforts to banish all these fictions from my mind I was in the end altogether seduced by them, and my only occupation was to try and impose some order and sequence upon them, to turn them into a sort of novel.

My chief embarrassment was shame at so fully and openly going back on myself. After the strict principles that I had just proclaimed

* I am surprised now at my stupidity in not having seen when I wrote this that the Holbach circle's annoyance at seeing me go into the country and stay there was chiefly because they now no longer had Mme Le Vasseur at hand to guide them in their system of intrigues with reliable information about times and places. This idea occurs to me late, but perfectly explains the oddness of their conduct, which is inexplicable under any other hypothesis.

with so much noise, after the austere rules that I had so loudly preached, after so much stinging invective against effeminate books which breathed of love and languor, could anything more unexpected or more shocking be imagined than that I should suddenly with my own hand enrol myself among the authors of these books I had so violently censured? I felt my inconsistency in all its force, I reproached myself for it, I blushed for it, I was angry with myself. But all this was insufficient to bring me back to reason. Being completely captivated, I was forced to submit, whatever the risk might be, and to make up my mind to brave the world's opinion, though subject to the consideration that I could decide later whether to show my work or not, for I did not yet suppose that I should go so far as to publish it.

Having taken my resolution, I plunged whole-heartedly into my reveries and, by turning them over and over in my head, finally sketched a kind of plan, the fulfilment of which is now known. This was certainly the best use I could have put my follies to. The love of virtue, which has never left my heart, turned them to purposes at once useful and potentially beneficial to morality. My voluptuous imaginings would have lost all their grace if they had lacked the gentle colours of innocence. A weak girl is an object of pity, on whom love may confer some appeal, and who is often none the less lovable for her weakness. But who can bear the sight of fashionable manners without indignation? What is there more revolting than the pride of an unfaithful wife who openly treads all her duties underfoot and expects her husband to be deeply grateful for the favour when she is so kind as to see that she is not caught in the act? There are no perfect beings to be found in Nature. Their examples are too remote from our world. But that a young person, born with a heart both honest and tender, should allow herself to be conquered by love before marriage, and should gather sufficient strength, when a wife, to turn the tables and regain her virtue, should anyone tell you that this picture is utterly scandalous and serves no useful purpose, he is a liar and a hypocrite. Do not listen to him.

In addition to morality and marital fidelity, which are at the root of all social order, I had a more secret object in view, that of harmony and the public peace; a greater object and perhaps a more intrinsically important one, but certainly a more important one at the moment when I wrote. The storm aroused by the *Encyclopaedia*, far from dying down, was then at its height. The two parties, let loose against one another with the utmost fury, were more like raging

wolves, ready to tear one another to pieces in their rage, than like Christians and philosophers anxious to enlighten one another, to convince one another, and each to lead the other back to the path of truth. Perhaps nothing was lacking on either side but active and trusted leaders for it to degenerate into a civil war; and God knows what would have been the outcome of a civil war of religion in which, fundamentally, the cruellest intolerance was the same on both sides. Being a born enemy of all party spirit, I had told both factions some hard truths, to which they had paid no attention. Then I thought of another expedient, that seemed admirable to me in my simplicity: which was to reduce their mutual hatred by destroying their prejudices, and to show each party merits and virtues in the other, deserving of public esteem and of mankind's respect. This far from sensible scheme, which assumed good faith in men, and by which I fell into the very error for which I reproached the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, met with the success it deserved; it did not bring the parties an inch nearer together but united them to fall on me. Meanwhile, until such time as experience should teach me my foolishness, I devoted myself to my task with a zeal which was, I venture to say, worthy of the purpose that inspired me, and drew the two characters of Wolmar and Julie with an enthusiasm that caused me to hope I had made them both lovable and, what is more, one because of the other.

Content with having roughly sketched in my plan, I returned to the detailed situations which I had outlined; and from my arrangement of them resulted the first two parts of *Julie*, which I wrote and copied out during that winter with indescribable pleasure, using for the purpose the finest gilt-edged paper, with blue and silver sand to dry the ink, and blue thread to sew my sheets together. For I could not find anything courtly and elegant enough for my charming girls, on whom I doted like a second Pygmalion. Every evening, by my fire-side, I read and reread these two parts to the *bosses*. Thérèse did not speak, but was moved to join me in my tears. Her mother, however, finding no compliments in it, could not understand it at all, and was content to repeat at every silent interval: 'That is very fine indeed, sir.'

Mme d'Épinay was worried at the thought of my being alone in winter deep in the woods and in an isolated house, and very often sent for news of me. Never did I have such genuine proofs of her friendship, and never did my feelings respond more warmly to hers. It would be wrong of me not to mention among these proofs that she

sent me her portrait, and asked me to tell her how she could procure mine, which had been painted by Latour and exhibited in the Salon. I must not omit either another of her attentions, which will appear ludicrous but which contributes to the story of my character owing to the impression it made upon me. One day when it was freezing very hard I opened a parcel containing several things she had undertaken to get for me, and found in it a little under-petticoat of English flannel, which she informed me she had worn, and out of which she wanted me to make myself a waistcoat. The wording of her note was charming, and full of naïve affection. This mark of more than friendly attention seemed to me so tender – it was as if she had stripped herself to clothe me – that in my emotion I kissed the note and the petticoat twenty times in tears. Thérèse thought that I had gone mad. It is remarkable that of all the tokens of friendship which Mme d'Épinay lavished upon me none ever touched me as much as that one, and that even after our rupture I have never called it to memory without being moved. I kept that little note for a long time, and I should have it still if it had not met with the fate of my other letters of that period.

Although my retention of urine gave me little respite in winter, and during part of the time I was reduced to the use of catheters, this season was, on the whole, the quietest and most delightful I had spent since I had been living in France. For the four or five months that bad weather kept me particularly free from unwelcome callers I savoured more than I ever have before or since that independent, uninterrupted and simple life, the enjoyment of which merely served to increase its value for me, with no other company than that of the two *bosses* in fact and the two cousins in imagination. It was at that time especially that I congratulated myself more every day on the course I had had the good sense to adopt despite the outcries of my friends in their annoyance at seeing me free myself from their tyranny; and when I heard of that madman's attempt (on the King's life), when Deleyre and Mme d'Épinay spoke to me in their letters of the unrest and agitation reigning in Paris, how I thanked Heaven for having removed me from those spectacles of horror and crime, which would only have nourished and embittered the bilious humour that the sight of public disorders aroused in me. Whereas, there being nothing but smiling and peaceful things all around my retreat, my heart yielded only to pleasant feelings. I record here with satisfaction the course of the last peaceful moments that were left to me. The spring which followed this very calm winter saw those misfortunes which I have still to

describe spring to life, and as they follow one upon another there will be no similar intervals to record in which I have had time to take breath.

I seem to recollect, however, that during this interval of peace, and even in the depths of my retreat, I was not left altogether undisturbed by the Holbachians. Diderot stirred up some trouble for me and, unless I am very much mistaken, it was during that winter that *The Natural Son** appeared, about which I shall soon have to speak. Except for that, owing to reasons which the sequel will make clear, I have retained few trustworthy records of this period; for those which were left to me are very inexact in the matter of dates. Diderot never dated his letters. Mme d'Épinay and Mme d'Houdetot only headed theirs with the day of the week, and Deleyre most often did the same. When I attempted to arrange these letters in order I had to supply rough dates, for which I groped in my memory and on which I cannot rely. So, being unable to fix with certainty the beginning of these quarrels, I prefer to relate hereafter, in a single account, all that I can remember about them.

The return of spring had redoubled my amorous delirium, and in my erotic transports I had composed for the last parts of *Julie* several letters that betray the ecstatic state in which I wrote them. I would mention, amongst others, the one about the Elysium and the one about the lake-side walk which, if I remember rightly, come at the end of the fourth part. Whoever can read those two letters without his heart softening and melting with the same emotion which inspired me to write them, had better close the book; for he is incapable of judging matters of feeling.

At precisely this same time I received a second unexpected visit from Mme d'Houdetot. In the absence of her husband, who was a captain in the Gendarmerie, and of her lover, who was also a soldier, she had come to Eaubonne, in the centre of the Montmorency valley, where she had rented rather a pretty house. It was from there that she came to make a fresh visit to the Hermitage. On this occasion she came on horseback, in man's clothes. Although I am not very fond of such masquerades, the air of romance about this one charmed me, and this time it was love. As it was the first and only love in all my life, and as through its consequences it will ever remain a terrible and indelible memory to me, may I be forgiven for describing it in some detail.

* *Le Fils naturel*.

The Countess d'Houdetot was getting on for thirty, and was not in the least beautiful. Her face was marked by small-pox; her complexion was far from clear, she was short-sighted, and her eyes were rather too round. But she looked young all the same, and her animated, though at the same time gentle, features were most appealing. She had a mass of thick black hair, which was naturally curly and reached down to her knees. Her figure was small, and all her movements had something about them that was at the same time awkward and graceful. She had a very natural and very pleasant wit, which was a happy blend of gaiety, spontaneity, and simplicity. She overflowed with delightful remarks, which were never contrived and often escaped her involuntarily. She had several agreeable accomplishments; she played the piano, danced well, and was quite a pretty versifier. As for her character, it was angelic; its foundation was a gentleness of soul, but it was a combination of every virtue except prudence and strength. She was, moreover, so reliable in her dealings, so loyal in her relationships, that even her enemies had no cause to conceal themselves from her. By her enemies I mean those men, or rather those women, who hated her. For she herself had a heart incapable of hatred, and I think that this quality contributed greatly towards arousing my passion for her. During the most intimate of confidences I never heard her abuse anyone who was not there, not even her sister-in-law. She could neither disguise what she thought of anyone, nor even repress any of her feelings; and I am certain that she spoke of her lover even to her husband as she spoke of him to her friends, her acquaintances, and all the world alike. Lastly, what proves beyond question the purity and sincerity of her splendid character is that in the tremendous fits of absent-mindedness to which she was subject she often committed indiscretions most damaging to herself, but never any that did harm to anyone else.

She had been married very young and against her wishes to the Count d'Houdetot, a man of position and a good soldier, but a gambler and a chicaner who was not at all likeable and whom she did not love. She found in M. de Saint-Lambert all her husband's good qualities together with others that were more agreeable: intellect, virtue, and talents. If anything in the manners of this age can be forgiven, it is undoubtedly an attachment refined by length of time, honoured by its effect upon others, and based solely upon mutual esteem.

It was somewhat out of inclination, so far as I have been able to

judge, but chiefly to please Saint-Lambert that she came to see me. He had exhorted her to do so, for he quite rightly supposed that the friendship which was beginning to grow up between us would make our relationship pleasant for all three. She knew that I was informed of their affair; and since she could speak to me about him without constraint she quite naturally found my company congenial. She came; I saw her; I was intoxicated with love that lacked an object. My intoxication enchanted my eyes, my object became identified with her, I saw my Julie in Mme d'Houdetot, and soon I saw only Mme d'Houdetot, but endowed with all the perfections with which I had just embellished the idol of my heart. To complete my undoing, she talked to me of Saint-Lambert like a passionate lover. How contagious is the power of love! As I listened, as I felt myself beside her, I was seized with a delicious trembling that I had never experienced beside any other woman. As she spoke I felt myself moved; I imagined that I was only sympathizing with her feelings, when really I was beginning to feel as she did. I swallowed the poisoned cup in long draughts, and at first only tasted its sweetness. In the end, unbeknown to us both, she inspired me with all the emotion for herself that she expressed for her lover. Alas, it was late in the day, and it was cruel indeed to be consumed by a passion as strong as it was unfortunate for a woman whose heart was full of love for another!

In spite of the extraordinary emotions I had felt in her company I did not perceive at first what had happened to me, and it was not till after her departure that when trying to think of Julie I was surprised to find that I could only think of Mme d'Houdetot. Then the scales fell from my eyes, and I was aware of my misfortune. I groaned over it, but I did not foresee its results.

I could not make up my mind for a long time how to behave to her, as if true love left a man sufficient reason to follow a determined course. I had come to no conclusion when she returned and took me by surprise. Then I understood. Shame, the companion of crime, struck me dumb and trembling before her; I dared not open my mouth or raise my eyes; I was in an inexpressible confusion which it was impossible for her not to see. I made up my mind to confess my tale to her and to leave her to guess the reason: that was a clear enough way of telling her.

If I had been young and attractive, and if subsequently Mme d'Houdetot had been weak, I should blame her conduct here; but as all this was not the case I cannot but applaud and admire her. The

course she adopted displayed generosity and prudence alike. She could not leave me suddenly without telling Saint-Lambert the reason, which would have compelled him to visit me. That would have meant risking a break between two friends, and perhaps a scandal, which she was anxious to avoid. For me she felt both respect and good-will. She was sorry for my foolishness; without flattering it she deplored it, and tried to cure me of it. She was glad to preserve a friend whom she valued both for her lover and herself, and talked to me about nothing with so much pleasure as about the intimate and delightful trio we could form together once I had returned to my senses. But she did not always confine herself to these friendly exhortations, and did not spare me, when necessary, the harsher reproaches I thoroughly deserved.

I was still less sparing of them myself. Once I was alone I came to my senses, and I was calmer for having spoken. A love known to the person who inspires it becomes more bearable. The violence with which I reproached myself for my passion should have cured me, if a cure had been possible. What powerful arguments did I not call to my aid in order to stifle it! My moral sense, my belief, my principles, the shame, the faithlessness, the crime, the abuse of a trust I owed to friendship and, last of all, the absurdity of being consumed at my age by the most extravagant of passions for an object whose heart was already engaged, and could neither make me any return nor afford me any hope: by a passion indeed which far from having anything to gain by constancy became less bearable every day.

Who would believe that this last consideration, which should have added weight to the rest, was the one which invalidated them all? What scruple should I feel, thought I, for a folly that hurts no one but myself? Am I a young gentleman of whom Mme d'Houdetot should stand in fear? Would it not be supposed from my presumptuous remorse that my gallantry, my air, and my personal appearance were about to seduce her! Well! Poor Jean-Jacques, love as you will, with a safe conscience, and do not fear that your sighs will do Saint-Lambert any harm!

Since I was, as you have seen, never presumptuous even in my youth, this humble manner of thinking was in keeping with my bent; it flattered my passion. It was enough to make me abandon myself to it unreservedly, and laugh even at the irrelevant scruples which I believed I had invented rather out of vanity than for any good reason. A good lesson for honest souls whom vice never attacks openly, but

whom it finds means of surprising by hiding itself always beneath the mask of some sophistry, and sometimes beneath that of some virtue.

Guilty and unrepentant, I was soon guilty beyond all measure; and I beg my readers to observe how my passion followed the line of my nature, finally to plunge me into the abyss. At first it took on an attitude of humility in order to reassure me. Then, to make me daring, it pushed me from humility to mistrust. Mme d'Houdetot did not cease to recall me to my duty and to reason, and never for a moment encouraged my folly. But otherwise she treated me with the greatest kindness. Her attitude towards me was that of a most affectionate friend. This friendship would have been sufficient for me, I protest, if I had thought it sincere. But as I found it too strong to be real, I got the idea into my head that love so unsuitable to my present years and my appearance had lowered me in Mme d'Houdetot's eyes, and that, being young and foolish, she only wanted to amuse herself with me and my antiquated passions.

I thought that she had confided in Saint-Lambert, and that in his indignation at my breach of faith he had fallen in with her views, and that they had planned together to turn my head completely and then make fun of me. This idiocy of mine which had caused me to make a fool of myself with Mme de Larnage, whom I did not know, at the age of twenty-six, would have been pardonable in the case of Mme d'Houdetot, when I was forty-five, had I not known that both she and her lover were too decent to indulge in so barbarous an amusement.

Mme d'Houdetot continued to pay me visits, which I was not slow to return. She was fond of walking, as I was, and we took long strolls through that enchanted country. Content to love her and with my courage in declaring my love, I should have been in the most delightful situation if my extravagance had not destroyed all its charm. At first she could not in the least understand the silly pettishness with which I received her kindnesses. But since my heart is incapable of ever concealing its emotions, it did not leave her long in ignorance of my suspicions. She tried to laugh them off, but this method did not succeed. Indeed it would have led to a violent outburst of rage. So she changed her tone. Her gentleness and sympathy were inexhaustible. She reproached me, and her reproaches cut me to the heart. She expressed distress at my unjust fears, and I took advantage of her emotion. I demanded proof that she was not fooling me, and she saw that there was no other means of reassuring me. I became pressing; the position was a delicate one. It is astonishing, perhaps even unique,

that a woman who had gone so far as to bargain, should have got off so lightly. She refused me nothing that the tenderest friendship could grant. She granted me nothing that could make her unfaithful, and I had the humiliation of seeing that the fire her slight favours kindled in my senses did not convey the tiniest spark to hers.

I have said somewhere* that nothing must be granted to the senses when they have to be refused anything. In order to see how false this maxim proved in the case of Mme d'Houdetot, and how justified she was in counting on herself, I should have to enter into the details of our long and frequent conversations, and follow them in all their excitement through the four months we spent together in an intimacy almost unparalleled between friends of opposite sexes, restrained within the limits which we never overstepped. Ah, if I had waited so long before knowing true love, now my heart and my senses paid the arrears in full! What must be the raptures one feels with a loved one who returns one's love, if an unrequited love can inspire so much as it does!

But I am wrong to speak of an unrequited love, for mine was in a sense returned. There was equal love on both sides, though it was never mutual. We were both intoxicated with love, – hers for her lover, and mine for her; our sighs and our delicious tears mingled together. We confided tenderly in one another, and our feelings were so closely in tune that it was impossible for them not to have united in something. Yet even when our intoxication was at its most dangerous height she never forgot herself for a moment. As for myself, I protest, I swear, that if ever I was betrayed by my senses and tried to make her unfaithful, I never truly desired it. The vehemence of my passion of itself kept it within bounds. The duty of self-denial had exalted my soul. The light of every virtue adorned in my eyes the idol of my heart; to have soiled that divine image would have been to destroy it. I might have been able to commit the crime; a hundred times it has been committed in my heart. But to dishonour my Sophie! Could that ever be possible? No, no! I told her a hundred times that, if it had been in my power to gratify myself, if she had put herself at my mercy of her own free will, except in a few short moments of madness I should have refused to purchase my own happiness at such a price. I loved her too well to wish to possess her.

It is almost three miles from the Hermitage to Eaubonne, and on my frequent visits I sometimes spent the night there. One evening

[* In *The New Héloïse*.]

when we supped together alone we went for a walk in the garden in the loveliest moonlight. At the bottom of the garden was a largish wood through which we went to find a pretty plantation adorned with a newly made cascade for which I had given her the idea. Immortal memory of innocence and bliss! It was in that wood, sitting with her on a grass bank beneath an acacia in full flower, that I found a language really able to express the emotions of my heart. It was the first and only time in my life, but I was sublime, if such a word can describe all the sympathy and seductive charm that the most tender and ardent love can breathe into the heart of a man. What intoxicating tears I shed at her knees! What tears I drew from her in spite of herself! Finally, in her involuntary excitement she cried: 'Never was there a man so charming, never a lover who loved like you. But your friend Saint-Lambert is listening to us, and my heart could not love twice.' I sighed and was silent. I embraced her. What an embrace! But that was all. She had been living alone for six months, that is to say away from her lover and her husband; for three months I had been seeing her almost every day. Love was always the third party when we were together. We had supped together, we were alone in a wood in the moonlight; and after two hours of the most animated and affectionate conversation she left that wood – and her friend's arms – in the middle of the night, as guiltless, as pure in body and heart, as when she had entered it. Reader, consider all the circumstances, I shall add nothing more.

But let no one imagine that here my senses left me undisturbed, as they did with Thérèse and with Mamma. As I have already said, this time it was love, love with all its strength and all its violence. I will not describe the agitation, the tremblings, the palpitations, the convulsive movements, or the faintings of the heart which I continually experienced; the effect her image had on my heart is sufficient evidence. I have said that it was some distance from the Hermitage to Eaubonne; I went by the hills of Andilly, which are delightful; and as I walked I dreamt of her I was about to see, of the affectionate welcome she would give me, and of the kiss, that fatal kiss, even before I received it. It so fired my blood that my head was dizzy, my eyes were dazzled and blind, and my trembling knees could no longer support me. I had to stop and sit down; my whole bodily mechanism was in utter disorder; I was on the point of fainting. Aware of my danger I tried as I set out again to distract myself and think of something else. But before I had gone twenty yards the same thoughts and

everything that followed upon them assailed me once more, and I could not shake them off. Whatever efforts I made, I do not think that I ever succeeded in making this journey alone without suffering. I arrived at *Eaubonne* weak, exhausted, worn out, and scarcely able to hold myself up. The moment I saw her, everything was right again; in her company I felt only the irksomeness of an inexhaustible and always useless vigour. There was on my road, within sight of *Eaubonne*, a pleasant terrace called *Mount Olympus*, to which she would sometimes come to meet me. I would arrive first, and had to wait for her. But how painful that waiting was! As a distraction I tried to write with a pencil notes which should have been written with the finest drops of my blood. But I never succeeded in finishing one that was legible. When she discovered one in the niche which we had agreed upon, all that she learned from it was the pitiable state of mind in which it had been written. This state and, what was worse, its continuance over three months of ceaseless stimulation and privation threw me into an exhaustion from which I did not recover for several years, and finally brought on a rupture that I shall carry with me to the grave. Such was the sole amorous gratification of a man whose temperament was at the same time the most inflammable and the most timid that Nature can ever have created. Such were the last happy days that were dealt out to me upon earth, and now begins the long tissue of my life's misfortunes, in which, as will be seen, there have been few interruptions.

Throughout the course of my life, as has been seen, my heart has been as transparent as crystal, and incapable of concealing for so much as a moment the least lively feeling which has taken refuge in it. Judge whether it was possible for me to hide my love for *Mme d'Houdetot* for long. Our intimacy was clear to all eyes; we made no secret or mystery of it. It was not of a nature to require any. *Mme d'Houdetot* felt the most tender friendship for me, and did not blame herself for it in the least; and I felt an esteem for her, the true justification for which no one knew better than I. She by her frankness, her carelessness, and her lack of precaution, and I by my honesty, my clumsiness, my pride, my impatience, and impetuosity, exposed ourselves in our delusive security to far greater danger of attack than we should have done if we had been guilty. We went together to *La Chevette*, we often met there, and sometimes even by appointment. We lived there in our usual way, taking walks every day together and talking of our affections and our duties, of our friend and of our

innocent schemes, all this in the park adjoining Mme d'Épinay's apartments, and beneath her windows, from which she watched us incessantly and, fancying that we were defying her, feasted her eyes and glutted her heart with rage and indignation.

Women have all the arts of concealing their anger, especially when it is strong. Mme d'Épinay, a violent but deliberate woman, possesses this power to an eminent degree. She pretended to see nothing, to suspect nothing; and while she redoubled her cares and attentions to me, and almost made me advances, she overwhelmed her sister-in-law with premeditated rudenesses, treating her with a contempt which she seemingly wished me to imitate. Naturally she did not succeed in this, but I was on the rack. Torn by conflicting feelings, and at the same time touched by her kindnesses, I could hardly contain my anger when I saw her being so rude to Mme d'Houdetot. That lady, in her angelic sweetness, bore all this without complaint, and even without feeling any resentment. She was, moreover, often so absent-minded and always so insensible to such things that half the time she noticed nothing.

I was so taken up with my passion that I had no eyes for anything but Sophie (which was one of Mme d'Houdetot's names), and did not so much as notice that I had become the talk of the whole house and all who came there. Baron d'Holbach who, so far as I know, had never visited La Chevrette before, was one of these. If I had been as mistrustful as I have since become, I should very much have suspected Mme d'Épinay of having arranged this visit, in order to give him the amusement and gratification of seeing 'the citizen' in love. But at that time I was so dull that I did not so much as see what was glaringly plain to everyone else. All my stupidity, however, did not prevent me from noticing that the Baron looked more pleased and jovial than usual. Instead of frowning at me, as was his habit, he discharged a volley of witticisms in my direction, which I did not understand at all. I stared at him and said not a word; Mme d'Épinay held her sides with laughter, and I could not imagine what had come over them. As things had not yet gone beyond a joke, the best thing I could have done, if only I had seen it, would have been to join in the amusement. But, in fact, behind Baron's high-spirited mockery was to be seen a spiteful pleasure which shone in his eyes and which would, perhaps, have alarmed me if I had noticed it as clearly then as I have remembered it in retrospect.

One day when I went to see Mme d'Houdetot at Eaubonne, on her

return from one of her trips to Paris, I found her sad and saw that she had been crying. I was compelled to control myself since Mme de Blainville, her husband's sister, was there. But as soon as I could find an opportunity I told her of my concern. 'Ah,' she replied with a sigh, 'I am very much afraid that your foolishness may cost me my peace of mind. Saint-Lambert has been informed, and wrongly informed. He is fair to me, but he is annoyed; and what is worse, he has not told me all. Fortunately I have kept nothing about our friendship concealed from him. It was formed under his auspices. My letters were full of you, just as my heart was. The only thing that I have kept from him is your crazy love, of which I hoped to cure you. He does not mention it, but I can see that he thinks me criminally to blame for it. Someone has done us an ill turn, and me a wrong. But no matter. Either we must break altogether, or you must behave in a proper way. I do not want to have anything more to hide from my lover.'

This was the first moment when I experienced the shame of seeing myself humiliated by the knowledge that I was to blame, in the eyes of a young woman whose reproaches I knew to be just, and towards whom I should have acted as a mentor. The annoyance that I felt with myself might perhaps have been enough to conquer my weakness, if the tender compassion inspired by my victim had not further melted my heart. Alas, would it have been possible to steal myself at that moment when my heart was drowning in tears that welled up on every side? My tenderness soon changed to anger against the vile informers who had seen nothing but evil in a blameworthy but involuntary emotion, and had not been able to believe, or even imagine, the true sincerity of heart which atoned for it. We were not left long in doubt as to the hand that had dealt the blow.

We both knew that Mme d'Épinay was in correspondence with Saint-Lambert. This was not the first storm that she had raised for Mme d'Houdetot; she had made countless attempts to detach him from her, and the success of some of them made Mme d'Houdetot tremble for the future. Moreover, Grimm who had, I think, followed M. de Castries to the army was in Westphalia, where Saint-Lambert was; and they sometimes saw one another. Grimm had made several advances to Mme d'Houdetot, which had been unsuccessful. In great annoyance, he had then entirely ceased visiting her. One can imagine how coolly Grimm, with his well-known modesty, accepted the idea that she preferred a man older than himself whom, now that he was on terms with the great, he referred to as no more than his protégé.

My suspicions against Mme d'Épinay became certainties when I learnt what had happened in my own house. When I was at La Chevrette, Thérèse often came there, either to bring me letters, or to perform certain services for me which my ill-health rendered necessary. Mme d'Épinay had asked her whether Mme d'Houdetot and I corresponded. On her replying that we did, she pressed Thérèse to hand her Mme d'Houdetot's letters, promising to seal them up again so well that nothing would be noticed. Without showing how scandalized she was by this proposal, and without even informing me, Thérèse merely took the precaution of concealing the letters she brought me more carefully; a very fortunate measure, for Mme d'Épinay had her watched when she came, waited for her in the passage, and even carried her boldness so far on several occasions as to feel in her tucker. She went further; she invited herself one day, with M. Margency, to dine at the Hermitage for the first time since I had lived there, and seized the moment when I was out walking with Margency to go into my study with Thérèse and her mother and beg them to show her Mme d'Houdetot's letters. If the mother had known where they were, the letters would have been handed over. But luckily only her daughter knew, and she denied that I had kept any of them. The lie was undeniably an honourable, loyal, and generous act, whereas the truth would have been nothing but a breach of faith. Seeing that she could not tempt her, Mme d'Épinay tried hard to rouse her jealousy, and reproached her for her easy temper and her blindness. 'How can you help seeing', she said, 'that their connexion is a guilty one? If despite everything that hits you in the eye you are in need of further proofs, there is a ready means of obtaining them, in which you can help. You say that he tears Mme d'Houdetot's letters up as soon as he has read them. Well, carefully collect the pieces and give them to me. I will put them together, I promise you that.' Such were the lessons that my friend gave to my mistress.

Thérèse was so discreet as to keep all these attempts from me for a considerable time. But when she saw my puzzlement, she felt obliged to tell me everything, so that I should know whom I was dealing with and take measures to protect myself against the treachery which was being planned against me. My indignation and fury are beyond description. Instead of dissembling with Mme d'Épinay, after her own fashion, and resorting to counterplots, I yielded unreservedly to the impetuosity of my nature and, with my usual heedlessness, burst out quite openly. My lack of discretion can be judged by the following

letters which sufficiently show the procedure of both parties on this occasion.

Letter from Mme d'Épinay

(Packet A, No. 44)

Why do I never see you, my dear friend? I am worried about you. You promised me faithfully that you would not move except to come here and to return to the Hermitage. On that understanding I have left you quite free. But no, a whole week has gone by. If I had not been told that you are in good health I should suppose that you are ill. I expected you yesterday or the day before, but I looked for you in vain. Oh dear, what can be the matter with you? You have no business in hand, and you can have no troubles. For if you had I flatter myself that you would have come straight away to confide in me. Can it be that you are ill? Relieve me of my fears, and speedily I beg of you. Adieu, my good friend; and may my adieu bring me a good-morning from you.

Reply

Wednesday morning

I can tell you nothing yet. I am waiting till I am better informed, which I shall be sooner or later. In the meantime rest assured that persecuted innocence will find a defender zealous enough to make its slanderers repent, whoever they may be.

Second Letter from the same

(Packet A, No. 45)

I must say that your letter alarms me. What can it possibly mean? I have read it over more than two dozen times. Really I cannot understand a word of it. I can only see that you are tortured and uneasy, and that you are waiting till you are no longer so before telling me about it. My dear friend, were those the terms of our agreement? What has become of our friendship, of our mutual confidence? How have I come to lose it? Are you annoyed with me or on my behalf? Whatever it is, come this evening, I implore you. Remember that you promised me, not a week ago, not to keep anything back, but to tell me about things immediately. My dear friend, I rely upon our trust in one another. . . . I have just read your letter again. I cannot understand it any better, but

it makes me tremble. You seem to be cruelly upset. I wish I could calm you. But I have no idea what has alarmed you. I do not know what to say except that I shall be just as unhappy as you till I have seen you. If you are not here this evening at six I shall set out for the Hermitage to-morrow, whatever the weather and whatever my state of health; for I cannot possibly endure this suspense. Good-bye, my dear, good friend. At whatever risk, I will venture to ask you, whether I have any need to or not, to try and take care of yourself and stop the growth of your uneasiness, a state which is always fostered by solitude. A fly becomes a monster; I have often had such experiences.

Reply

Wednesday evening

I cannot come to see you, nor receive you here, so long as my present uneasiness continues. The mutual trust you speak of exists no longer, and you will not find it easy to restore it. At present I see in your anxiety nothing but the desire to extract from another person's confessions something that will suit your purposes. And my heart, which is prompt to unburden itself to another which is open to receive it, is closed to trickery and sharp practice. In the difficulty you have in understanding my letter I recognize your usual cleverness. Do you think that I am such a fool as to believe that you have not really understood it? No, but I know how to overcome your subtlety by frankness. I will explain myself more clearly, in order that you may understand me still less.

Two lovers are dear to me, who are firmly united and worthy of each other's love. I expect that you will not know whom I mean unless I give you their names. I assume that there has been some attempt to part them, and that I have been used to make one of them jealous. Not a very clever choice to make, but it seemed to suit certain evil designs; and of these designs I suspect you. I hope that this is becoming clearer.

So the woman I esteem most in the world is, to my knowledge, so infamous as to divide her heart and her person between two lovers, and I am so despicable as to be one of these two creatures! If I knew that you had really believed this of us for so much as a single moment, I should hate you to my dying day. But it is with having said it, and not with having thought it that I tax you. I do not understand which of us three you intended to injure by such conduct. But if you value your peace of mind you should be afraid that you might be so unlucky as to succeed. I have concealed neither from you nor from her how badly I think of certain relationships. But I would have them brought to an end in as honourable a way as they began. I would have an illicit love change into an eternal friendship. Would I who never injured anyone be the innocent means of harming my friends? No, I should never forgive you.

I should become your irreconcilable enemy. But your secrets shall always be respected; for I shall never break my word.

I do not suppose that my present uncertainties will last long. I shall very soon know if I am mistaken. In that case I shall perhaps have a great wrong to repair, and never in all my life shall I do anything with greater goodwill. But do you know how I shall atone for my errors in the short time I have still to spend near you? By doing what no one else will do; by frankly telling you what the world thinks of you, and what breaches you have to repair in your reputation. Notwithstanding all the self-styled friends who surround you, when you see me depart you can say farewell to truth. You will never find anyone else who will tell it to you.

Third Letter from the same

(Packet A, No. 46)

I did not understand your letter of this morning; I told you so because it was the truth. I do understand this evening's. Have no fear that I shall ever answer it. I am too anxious to forget it. And although I feel pity for you I have not been able to hold back the bitterness with which it fills my heart. I resort to tricks and cunning against you! I to be accused of the blackest infamy! Farewell, I am sorry that you have . . . Farewell, I do not know what I am saying. . . . Farewell, I shall be only too glad to forgive you. You may come when you please, and you will get a better reception than your suspicions deserve. But do not trouble to be concerned for my reputation. It matters little to me what it may be. My behaviour is virtuous, and that is enough for me. Moreover, I have absolutely no idea what has happened to those two people, whom I love as much as you do.

This last letter relieved me of one terrible embarrassment, and plunged me into another almost as great. Although all these letters and answers had been exchanged in the course of one day at lightning speed, that lapse of time had been enough to interrupt my raging fury and allow me to reflect upon the enormity of my rashness. Mme d'Houdetot had impressed upon me, above all things, the necessity of remaining calm and of leaving it to her to get out of her difficulties herself; also of avoiding, especially at that moment, any break or explosion. And now by the most open and atrocious insults I was deliberately enraging a woman only too prone to violent emotion. The only answer that I could expect from her would be so haughty, so disdainful, and so contemptuous that unless I were to behave with

despicable cowardice I should have to leave her house on the spot. Fortunately her cunning was greater than my fury, and by the tone of her reply she avoided reducing me to that extremity. But I had either to leave, or to go and see her immediately; the choice was unavoidable. I chose the latter alternative, though greatly puzzled as to what attitude I should adopt to the explanation which I could foresee. For how could I extricate myself without compromising either Mme d'Houde-tot or Thérèse? And woe to whichever of them I named! There was nothing that I did not fear for the victim of that implacable and intriguing woman's vengeance. To ward off such a disaster I had written only of my suspicions, wishing to avoid the necessity of producing my proofs. It is true that this made my outbursts the more inexcusable, for no mere suspicions could justify my treating a woman, and moreover a friend, as I had just treated Mme d'Épinay. But here begins the great and noble task which I have worthily fulfilled, of atoning for my faults and weaknesses by taking the blame for even greater faults of which I was incapable and which I never committed.

I did not have to undergo the attack I had feared; I got off with a fright. As I approached, Mme d'Épinay threw her arms round my neck and burst into tears. This unexpected reception on the part of my old friend moved me greatly. I wept freely as well. I said a few words which had very little meaning; she replied with a few that meant even less, and it all ended there. The meal was served; we went to table where, apprehending an explanation which I supposed was only deferred till after supper, I cut a poor figure. For I am so overpowered by the least disturbance that may affect me that I cannot hide it from anyone of any perspicacity. My air of embarrassment should have given her courage. However she did not risk an encounter, and there was no more explanation after supper than before. Nor was there one the next day; and our silent *tête-à-têtes* were filled only by indifferent matters, or by a few polite remarks from me in which I observed that I could not yet say anything about the basis of my suspicions, and protested with real sincerity that if they proved ill-founded my whole life would be devoted to repairing my injustice. She did not reveal the slightest curiosity as to the precise nature of these suspicions, or as to how they had come to me; and all our reconciliation, both from her side and mine, consisted in the embrace of our first meeting. Since she alone was the offended party, at least formally, I did not think that it was my business to seek an explanation that she did not seek herself, and I returned home as I had come. Continuing in other

respects on the same terms with her as before, I soon almost entirely forgot our quarrel, and foolishly supposed that she had forgotten it herself, for she appeared no longer to remember it.

This, as will soon be seen, was not the only annoyance brought upon me by my weakness. I suffered others no less painful, which I had not brought upon myself, but which arose from other people's attempts so to torment me in my solitude as to drag* me from it.

These troubles originated from Diderot and the Holbach clique. Since I had established myself at the Hermitage Diderot had not ceased to bother me either himself or by way of Deleyre; and I soon saw, from the latter's jokes about my woodland wanderings, what pleasure they took in travestying the hermit as an amorous shepherd. But this was not the subject of my encounters with Diderot; they had a more serious cause. After the publication of *The Natural Son* he had sent me a copy, which I had read with the interest and attention one gives to a friend's work. On reading the sort of poetics in dialogue form that he had appended to it I was surprised, and even a little saddened, to find among a number of unkind but bearable observations concerning those who live a solitary life, the following bitter sentence, which was unrelieved in its harshness: *Only the wicked man is alone*. This is equivocal and presents two meanings, as it seems to me: one of them is true, the other most untrue. For it is quite impossible that a man who is and wishes to be alone can or would injure anybody; and consequently he cannot be a wicked man. The sentence in itself, therefore, required an explanation, and all the more so from a writer who, when he printed it, had a friend living in solitary retirement. It seemed to me shocking and dishonourable for him to have published that without remembering his friend or, if he had remembered him, not to have made, at least in general terms, the honourable and just exception which he owed not only to that friend, but to so many philosophers of reputation who in all ages have sought peace and calm in retirement: sages whom for the first time in the history of the world a writer has dared with one stroke of the pen to condemn indiscriminately as so many scoundrels.

I was warmly attached to Diderot. I valued him sincerely, and I counted with entire confidence on similar feelings in him. But

*It was really Mme Le Vasseur whom they wished to entice away, since they required her for their conspiracy. It is astonishing that during the whole of this prolonged storm, my stupid confidence prevented my seeing that it was not myself but her that they wanted to bring back to Paris.

exasperated by the tireless persistence with which he eternally opposed me in my tastes, my inclinations, and my manner of life—in all those matters, in fact, which concerned me and me alone—revolted by the spectacle of a man younger than myself obstinately trying to manage me like a child; sick of his readiness to make promises and his negligence in keeping them; weary of so many appointments made and broken by him, and of his trick of always making fresh ones and breaking them too; tired of waiting in vain three or four times a month on days fixed by himself and of dining alone in the evening after having gone as far as Saint-Denis to meet him and waited for him all day, I found my heart already full of his manifold unkindnesses. But this last seemed to me graver still, and wounded me even more deeply. I wrote to him to complain, but so mildly, so affectionately that the letter was soaked with my tears, and should have been touching enough to have drawn tears from him. No one could ever guess the nature of his reply to my charges. Here it is, word for word (Packet A, No. 33):

I am very glad that my work pleased you and touched you. Our opinions about hermits differ. Say whatever good of them you will, you will be the only one in the world of whom I shall think it true. There would be a great deal to say on the subject if it were possible to speak to you without annoying you. A woman of eighty! etc. I have been told of a phrase from a letter from Mme d'Épinay's son which must have hurt you greatly, or else I do not know your intimate thoughts.

The last two phrases of this letter require an explanation. At the beginning of my stay at the Hermitage Mme Le Vasseur seemed to dislike the place and to find it too solitary. Her remarks on the subject were repeated to me, and I offered to send her back to Paris if she preferred it, to pay her rent and take the same care of her there as if she were still with me. She refused my offer, protesting that she was very happy at the Hermitage and that the country air was good for her. It was easy to see that this was true, for she seemed to be growing younger and was in much better health than in Paris. Thérèse even assured me that her mother would really have been very sorry if we had left the Hermitage, which was a truly delightful place to live, since she loved to potter about the garden and the orchard, of which she had the handling; and that she had only said what she had been told to say for the purpose of inducing me to return to Paris.

When this attempt did not succeed, they tried to obtain from my

conscience what my naturally obliging nature had failed to give them, and declared that I was committing a crime in keeping that old lady there, far from the assistance which she might need at her age. It did not occur to them that she and many other old people whose life was prolonged by the excellent country air could obtain that assistance from Montmorency, which lay at my door. It was as if there were no old people except in Paris, and as if they were incapable of living anywhere else. Mme Le Vasseur, who ate a great deal and most voraciously, was subject to bilious attacks and to violent bouts of diarrhoea which lasted several days and acted as a corrective. At Paris she never did anything for them and let Nature take her course. She acted in the same way at the Hermitage, knowing very well that she could do nothing better. No matter : because there were no doctors or chemists in the country, to leave her there was to condemn her to death, although she enjoyed very good health there. Diderot ought to have fixed the age at which it is no longer permissible, under pain of trial for murder, to allow old people to live away from Paris.

This was one of the two grievous accusations which prevented his making any exception for my benefit in his pronouncement that only a wicked man is ever alone; and this was the meaning of his pathetic exclamation and of the *etc.* that he had so sweetly added to it. *A woman of eighty, etc.*

I could think of no better way of replying to his reproaches than by referring to Mme Le Vasseur herself. I asked her to express her feelings quite naturally to Mme d'Épinay. To put her more at her ease, I did not ask to see her letter, and I showed her the following that I had written to Mme d'Épinay on the subject of a reply that I had decided to make to a still harsher letter from Diderot, a reply which she had prevented me from sending.

Thursday

Mme Le Vasseur owes you a letter, my dear friend, and I have asked her to tell you frankly what she thinks. So that she may feel under no constraint, I have told her that I do not wish to see her letter, and I ask you not to tell me anything about its contents.

I will not send off my letter since you are against it. But as I feel deeply insulted, to agree that I am in the wrong would be to act with a baseness and falsehood which I could never consent to. Certainly the Gospel orders him who receives a blow to turn the other cheek, but not to ask for pardon. Do you remember the man in the play who exclaims as he gives another character a beating: 'Now I am acting like a philosopher'?

Do not imagine that you can stop him from coming in the present bad weather. His anger will give him the time and strength that friendship fails to provide, and for the first time in his life he will arrive on the day he promised. He will strain himself to come and repeat with his own tongue the insults he has poured on me in his letters; I shall endure them with the utmost patience. He will return to Paris and fall ill and I shall be, as ever, a much hated man. What can I do? I must put up with it.

But do you not admire the wisdom of this man who one day proposed to fetch me to dinner at Saint-Denis in a coach, and to bring me back in the same way, and who a week later (Packet A, No. 34) finds that his finances only allow him to come to the Hermitage on foot? It is absolutely impossible that – to speak his language – this can be the expression of sincerity. For in that case his fortunes must have sustained some strange variations during that week.

I join in your grief at your mother's illness. But, as you see, your sorrows are nothing like mine. It is less painful to see the people one loves stricken with illness than to find them unjust and cruel.

Good-bye, my dear friend, this is the last time that I shall speak to you of this wretched affair. You talk of going to Paris with a coolness that would rejoice me at any other time.

I told Diderot by letter, at Mme d'Épinay's own suggestion, of what I had done in the matter of Mme Le Vasseur; and Mme Le Vasseur having chosen, as may be imagined, to stay at the Hermitage, where she enjoyed very good health, where she had always company and where she led a very pleasant life, Diderot no longer knew what crime to charge me with. So he construed this very precaution of mine into one, and did not fail to treat as yet another Mme Le Vasseur's continued residence at the Hermitage, although she stayed entirely of her own free will, and although it had only rested with her, and still rested with her, to return and live in Paris, with the same assistance from me that she received when living with me.

This is the explanation of Diderot's first reproach in his letter No. 33. The explanation of the second is in his letter No. 34:

*The Man of Letters** must have written and told you that there were twenty poor men on the ramparts dying of hunger and cold, and waiting for the pittance you used to give them. That is a specimen of our small talk . . . and if you were to hear the rest you would be equally amused.

* This was a nickname jestingly bestowed by Grimm on Mme d'Épinay's son.

Here is my reply to this formidable argument of which Diderot seemed so proud:

I believe that I replied to the *Man of Letters* – who is the son of a farmer general – that I did not pity the poor whom he had seen on the ramparts waiting for my pittance; that he had apparently amply compensated them for its loss; that I appointed him my substitute; that the poor of Paris had no reason to complain of this substitution; and that I should not find it so easy to discover as good a one for the poor of Montmorency, who are in far greater need of one. There is a respectable old man here who, after labouring all his life, can now work no longer and is dying of hunger in his old age. My conscience is more gratified by the penny I give him every Monday than if I had distributed half a crown among all the beggars on the ramparts. You philosophers amuse me when you consider the inhabitants of cities the only people with whom you are in duty bound to concern yourselves. It is in the country that one learns to love and serve humanity; in the cities all one learns is to despise it.

Such were the strange scruples on the strength of which a man of intelligence was so foolish as seriously to turn my absence from Paris into a crime, and which made him try to prove to me by my own example that no one could live away from the capital without being a criminal. I do not understand to-day how I could have been so stupid as to answer him and to get annoyed, instead of merely laughing in his face. However Mme d'Épinay's opinion and the clamouring of the Holbach clique had so hypnotized people in his favour that I was generally considered to be in the wrong in this matter; so much so that Mme d'Houdetot herself, who was a great admirer of Diderot, asked me to go and see him in Paris and make all the overtures for a reconciliation which, sincere and whole-hearted as it was on my side, was of short duration. The argument with which she conquered my heart was that Diderot, at that moment, was in distress. In addition to the storm aroused against the *Encyclopaedia* he was at that time the object of another most violent attack on the subject of his play which, despite the little note with which he had introduced it, he was accused of having taken complete from Goldoni. Diderot was even more sensitive to criticism than Voltaire, and this overwhelmed him. Mme de Graffigny had been so malicious as to circulate the rumour that I had seized this opportunity to break with him. It seemed to me only just and generous publicly to demonstrate the contrary, and I went to spend two days not only in his company but at his house. This was my

second trip to Paris since I had settled at the Hermitage. My first had been to hurry to poor Gauffecourt who had had an apoplectic stroke, from which he never wholly recovered; during which time I never left his bedside until he was out of danger.

Diderot welcomed me cordially. How many wrongs can be wiped out by a friend's embrace! After that, what resentment can remain in the heart? We did not enter into many explanations. There is no need of them when there have been insults on both sides. There is only one thing to do, to forget them. There had been no underhand plotting, at least so far as I was aware; it was not the same as with Mme d'Épinay. He showed me the plan of *The Father of the Family*.* "There," I said, 'is the best defence for *The Natural Son*. Keep silent, and work this piece over carefully. Then make your reply by just flinging it suddenly in your enemies' faces.' That is what he did, and it was most satisfactory. Almost six months before I had sent him the first two parts of *Julie* for his opinion. He had not read them yet. We read a portion of it together. He found it 'inflated' – that was his term, by which he meant repetitive and over-wordy. I had already felt this myself; but it was a delirious babbling. I have never been able to correct it. The last parts are not like that. The fourth, especially, and the sixth are masterpieces of language.

The second day of my stay he absolutely insisted on taking me to supper at M. d'Holbach's. We differed very widely; for I wanted even to break the agreement about the manuscript on chemistry, as I hated to be under any obligation to that man. Diderot won every time. He swore that d'Holbach loved me with all his heart and that I must forgive him his manner, which was the same to everybody and from which his friends suffered worse than anyone else. He put it to me that to refuse the profit from this manuscript after having accepted it two years before was to offer an undeserved affront to the donor, and that my refusal might even be misconstrued as a covert reproach to him for having delayed so long in completing the bargain. 'I see Holbach every day,' he added, 'and know the nature of his heart better than you. If you had any reason to be dissatisfied with it, do you think your friend capable of advising you to behave unworthily?' In short, with my usual weakness I allowed myself to be overruled and we went to sup with the Baron, who received me in his usual manner. But his wife greeted me coldly and almost insultingly. I could no longer recognize the charming Caroline who had shown herself so

* *Le Père de amille*.

well disposed towards me as a girl. I had seemed to detect long before that time that I was no longer viewed with so favourable an eye at the house of Aine since Grimm had become a frequent visitor there.

Whilst I was in Paris, Saint-Lambert returned on leave. As I did not know this I did not see him till I had gone back to the country, first at La Chevrette and then at the Hermitage, where he came with Mme d'Houdetot to ask me to dinner. It can be imagined how gladly I welcomed them! But I was even more delighted to see the good understanding between them. I was so pleased not to have disturbed their happiness that I felt happy myself; and I can swear that throughout my mad infatuation, but especially at that moment, even if I could have stolen Mme d'Houdetot from him I should never have wished to do so. I should not even have felt tempted to try. I found her so lovable in her love for Saint-Lambert that I could hardly imagine her being so if she had loved me; and far from wishing to interfere with their union, all that I most truly desired from her, throughout my delirium, was that she should allow herself to be loved. In short, however violent the passion with which I burned for her, I found it as sweet to be her confidant as to be the object of her love, and never for one moment looked on her lover as my rival, but always as my friend. It may be suggested that this was not really love. Very well, then, it was something more.

As for Saint-Lambert, he behaved like an honest and intelligent man. As I was the only guilty party I alone was punished, but he was merciful. He treated me sternly yet in a friendly manner, and I saw that I had lost some measure of his esteem, but none of his friendship. I consoled myself with the knowledge that the former would be much easier to recover than the latter, and that he was far too sensible to confuse an involuntary and transient weakness with a defect in character. If I were partly to blame for all that had transpired, it was to a very slight extent. Was it I who had sought out his mistress? Was it not he who had sent her to me? Was it not she who had come to seek me? Could I avoid receiving her? What could I do? They alone had done the mischief, and it was I who had suffered by it. In my place he would have acted much as I did, perhaps worse. For however faithful, however estimable Mme d'Houdetot might be, she was after all a woman; he was away, opportunities were frequent, temptations were severe, and it would have been very difficult for her always to defend herself with equal success against a more persistent lover. It undoubtedly said much for her and for me that in such a situation we

should have imposed limits on ourselves which we never allowed ourselves to infringe.

Although at the bottom of my heart I could adduce sufficiently honourable evidence in my favour, appearances were so much against me that the invincible feeling of shame which always dominated me made me appear like a guilty person in his presence, and he often took an unfair advantage of this in order to humiliate me. A single incident will illustrate our mutual relationship. I read him, after dinner, the letter I had written the previous year to Voltaire, of which he, Saint Lambert, had heard some mention. He went to sleep as I read it and I, who was once so proud and now looked so stupid, dared not break off but continued to read as he continued to snore. Such were my humiliations, and such was his vengeance; but he was too generous ever to exercise it except when we three were alone.

After his departure I found Mme d'Houdetot much changed in her attitude to me. I was as surprised as if I had had no reason to anticipate it, and I was more affected than I ought to have been, which caused me much suffering. It was as if everything which I expected to cure me only drove more deeply into my heart the arrow, which in the end I broke off rather than pulled out.

I had made up my mind to conquer myself entirely, and to leave nothing undone that might transform my insane passion into a pure and lasting friendship. To this end I had made the finest plans in the world, for the execution of which I needed Mme d'Houdetot's assistance. When I tried to speak to her I found her distracted and embarrassed. I felt that she no longer took any pleasure in my company; and I clearly perceived that something had occurred about which she did not wish to speak. What it was I have never learned. I could obtain no explanation of this change, and it tortured me. She asked me to return her letters, and I gave them all back to her with a scrupulousness which she did me the insult of for a moment doubting. This aspersion was another unexpected wound to my heart, as she must have known so well. She did me justice, but not immediately. I realized that on examining the packet I had returned to her she had felt conscious of having done me a wrong. I saw that she even reproached herself for it, and I regained a little ground by this. She could not take back her letters without returning me mine. She told me that she had burnt them. I ventured to doubt her in my turn, and I admit that I still do. No, letters like that are never put in the fire. Those in *Julie* have been considered ardent. Heavens, then, what would have been

said of these? No, never would one capable of inspiring such a passion have had the courage to burn the proofs of it. But I am not afraid either that she has ever made ill use of them. I do not think her capable of that, and besides I had taken precautions against it. A foolish but lively fear of ridicule had made me begin our correspondence on a note which secured my letters from being passed on to others. I carried the familiarity that I had assumed in my intoxication to the extent of addressing her in the second person singular, but in such a delicate way that she certainly could not have been hurt by it. However, she did complain of it several times, but in vain; her protests only reawoke my fears, and besides I could not make up my mind to draw back. If these letters are still in existence and one day see the light, the world will know how I have loved.*

The pain caused me by Mme d'Houdetot's cooling off, and my certainty that I had not deserved it, made me resort to the singular measure of complaining to Saint-Lambert himself. While waiting for the results of the letter I had written to him on this subject, I plunged into distractions which I ought to have looked for earlier. There were some festivities at La Chevrette, for which I wrote the music. I was excited by the pleasure of displaying before Mme d'Houdetot a talent which she admired, and another circumstance too helped to stir my imagination. This was the desire to show that the author of *The Village Sorcerer* was a skilled musician. For I had been conscious for a long time that someone was striving in secret to call this into question, at least so far as the art of composition was concerned. My first appearance in Paris, and the tests to which I had been subjected on different occasions, both at M. Dupin's and at M. de la Popelinière's; the quantity of music which I had composed over fourteen years in the company of the most famous artists, and beneath their very eyes; then my opera *The Gallant Muses*, also *The Sorcerer*, and a motet which I had composed for Mlle Fel and which she had sung at the sacred concert; all the discussion I had had on the noble art with the greatest masters: everything seemed to combine to prevent or dispel any such doubt. It existed nevertheless, even at La Chevrette, and I saw that M. d'Épinay was not exempt from it. Without appearing to be conscious of this, I undertook to compose a motet for him for the dedication of the chapel of La Chevrette, and I asked him to provide me with a text of his choosing. He commissioned de Linant, his son's tutor, to provide it. De Linant arranged some words that suited the

[* These letters have never been found.]

subject, and a week after I received them the motet was finished. On this occasion annoyance was my inspiration, and never did richer music flow from my pen. The text begins with the words: *Ecce sedes hic Tonantis*,* and the grandeur of the opening is in keeping with them, while all the rest of the motet is so beautiful and melodious that everyone was struck by it. I had composed it for a large orchestra, and d'Épinay got together the best symphonic players. Mme Bruna, an Italian artist, sang the motet, and was well accompanied. So successful was the work that it was subsequently played at a sacred concert, where despite underground cabals and indifferent execution it was twice received with equal applause. For M. d'Épinay's birthday I devised the idea of a kind of performance, half play, half pantomime, which Mme d'Épinay composed and for which I also wrote the music. When Grimm arrived he heard of my musical successes. An hour afterwards they had ceased to be spoken of; but at least no more doubts were thrown, so far as I know, on my knowledge of composition.

No sooner was Grimm at La Chevrette, where already I was not too happy, than he succeeded in making my stay there unbearable by such conceited behaviour as I had never seen in anyone before, behaviour which defied the imagination. On the day before his arrival I was moved from the favoured room that I occupied next to Mme d'Épinay's, and it was got ready for M. Grimm. I was given another, more remote one. 'Well,' I said with a laugh to my hostess, 'this is the way newcomers turn the old inhabitants out.' She seemed embarrassed; and I understood the reason for this better that very evening, when I learnt that there was a secret door from her room to the one I was leaving, which she had seen no reason to point out to me. Her affair with Grimm was concealed from nobody, either in her house or out of it, not even from her husband. However, far from confessing it to me, her confidant in secrets much more vital to her, and one on whom she could safely rely, she always stoutly denied it. I understood that this reserve was due to Grimm, to whom I had entrusted all my secrets but who did not want me to be privy to any of his.

Whatever prejudices my old feelings, which were not quite dead, and the man's real merits excited in me in his favour, they were not proof against the deliberate efforts he made to destroy them. He

*I have since learnt that these words were by Santeuil, and that M. de Linant had quietly appropriated them.

greeted me in the style of the Count de Tuffière,* and scarcely condescended to return my bow; he did not address a single word to me and soon cured me of addressing any to him by absolutely failing to reply. He took precedence everywhere, and always seized the best place, without ever paying attention to me. I could have stood that if he had not behaved with such revolting affectation. But this can be judged by a single incident from among a thousand. One evening when Mme d'Épinay felt a little unwell she asked to have supper in her room, and went up to eat it beside the fire. She invited me to come up with her, and I did so. Grimm followed us. The little table was already laid, but there were only two places. The meal was served and Mme d'Épinay sat down on one side of the fire. M. Grimm took an armchair, settled himself on the other side, drew up the little table between them, unfolded his napkin, and set about his meal without addressing a single word to me. Mme d'Épinay blushed and, to compel him to atone for his rudeness, offered me her own seat. He said nothing, and did not look at me. Not being able to get near the fire, I began to walk up and down the room, until a place should be laid for me. He let me take my supper off the edge of the table away from the fire, without offering me the least apology, although I was his senior and in poor health, and although I was an older friend of the house than he, having in fact introduced him there, whereas as the lady's favourite he should really have done me the honours. All his behaviour to me conformed fairly well to this sample. He did not exactly treat me as his inferior; he looked on me as a nonentity. I found it difficult to recognize the former tutor who, at the Prince of Saxe-Gotha's, felt honoured by a glance from me. I found it still harder to reconcile his rigid silence and his insulting airs with the tender friendship which he boasted of feeling for me in the company of anyone whom he knew to be my friend. It is true that he hardly gave any sign of it except to pity me for my lack of wealth, for which I did not pity myself, or to deplore my sad fate, with which I was contented, or to lament that I so abruptly refused the kindnesses which he said he had tried to do me. This was his way of exciting admiration for his loving generosity, and blame for my ungrateful misanthropy. And so he insensibly accustomed everyone to the idea that the relationship between a protector, such as he, and a poor wretch, like myself, consisted all of kindnesses on one side and obligations on the other, without visualizing, even as a remote possibility,

[* A character in Destouches's comedy *The Man of Conceit* (*Le Glorieux*).]

that it could be a friendship between equals. For my part, I have wondered in vain in what way I could be under an obligation to this new patron. I had lent him money, he never lent me any; I had looked after him in his illness, he hardly paid me a visit when I was sick; I had introduced him to all my friends, and he had never introduced me to any of his; I had sung his praises as loud as I could, but if he praised me it was less publicly and in another manner. Never did he do, or even offer to do me a service of any kind. How then could he be my Maecenas? How was I his protégé? That was more than I could understand, and it still is.

It is true that he was arrogant with everyone, more or less, but he was not so brutally so with anyone except myself. I remember that once Saint-Lambert almost threw a plate at his head, when he more or less gave him the lie at table by saying rudely: 'That is not true.' Not only was his tone naturally sarcastic, but he had also an upstart's conceit, and, finally, he made himself absurd by his continuous insolence. Mixing with the great had tempted him into assuming airs that one only finds in the least intelligent of them. He never summoned his valet except with a 'Heh!', as if the great man had so many servants that he did not know who was on duty. If he sent him to make purchases he threw the money on the floor instead of putting it into his hand. In fact he completely forgot that the valet was a man, and treated him with such complete contempt that the poor fellow, who was a very good lad that Mme d'Épinay had given him, left his service for no other reason but the impossibility of putting up with such treatment. He was the La Fleur to this new *Man of Conceit*.*

Though he was as fatuous as he was vain, with his huge dull eyes and his flabby face, he fancied himself with the ladies; and since his comedy with Mlle Fels he passed with several of them for a man of deep feelings. This had made him a fashionable figure, and had given him a fancy for womanish beautification. He began to play the beau. His toilet became an important business. Everyone knew that he made up, and I, who would not believe it, began to be convinced not only by the improvement in his complexion and by finding some pots of cosmetic on his dressing-table, but because on going into his room one morning I discovered him brushing his nails with a little brush made for the purpose, a job he proudly continued to do in my presence. I concluded that a man who spends two hours every morning polishing his nails may well spend a few moments filling the

[* A further reference to Destouches's comedy.]

wrinkles in his skin with make-up. The excellent Gauffecourt, who was anything but a fool, laughingly nicknamed him *Tirante the White*.*

All these were merely absurdities, but most antipathetic to my nature. And in the end they made me suspicious of him. I found it difficult to believe that a man whose head was turned in this way could keep his heart in the right place. He prided himself on nothing so much as his sensitiveness and strength of feeling. How could this be consonant with faults which are peculiar to little minds? How could the vigorous and repeated flights which any sensitive heart must take outside itself leave him time to be continuously occupied with so many little cares for his own little person? Why, good Heavens, a man who feels his heart burning with that celestial fire seeks to breathe it forth, and to show his inner self. He would wish to show his heart upon his face; that is the only sort of cosmetics he would think of.

I remembered the summary of his moral code which Mme d'Épinay had repeated to me, and which she had adopted from him. It consisted of one single article, to the effect that the sole duty of man is to follow all the inclinations of his heart. This code, when I heard of it, gave me intense food for thought, although I only took it for a joke at the time. But I soon saw that this principle was actually his rule of conduct, and I had only too convincing a proof of it in the sequel, to my own cost. This is the secret doctrine of which Diderot spoke to me so often without, however, ever explaining it.

I remembered the frequent warnings I had received some years ago, that the man was false, that he merely affected to have feelings, and that really he did not like me at all. I called to mind several little anecdotes to illustrate this, which had been told me by M. de Francueil and Mme de Chenonceaux, neither of whom had any opinion of him, and both of whom must have known him, since Mme de Chenonceaux was the daughter of Mme de Rochechouart, an intimate friend of the late Count de Frièse, and M. de Francueil was on very close terms with the Viscount de Polignac, and had lived a great deal at the Palais-Royal just at the moment when Grimm was beginning to work his way in. All Paris was aware of his despair after the death of the Count de Frièse. It was a question of preserving the reputation he had acquired after his cruel treatment by Mlle de Fel, a bit of charlatanism that I should have seen through better than anyone else if I had been less dazzled at the time. They had to carry him off to the

[* The hero of one of those romances of chivalry derided in *Don Quixote*.]

Hôtel de Castries, where he worthily sustained his part and gave himself over to the most mortal grief. There, every morning, he would go out into the garden to weep to his heart's content, holding his tear-soaked handkerchief in front of his eyes so long as he could be seen from the hotel. But when he came to the corner of a certain little street, certain people whom he had not noticed would see him suddenly stuff his handkerchief into his pocket and take out a book. He was observed to do this on several occasions, and the story soon went round Paris, but it was immediately forgotten. I had forgotten it myself, but an incident that concerned me reminded me of it. I was in my bed in the Rue de Grenelle and at death's door. He was in the country. One morning he came to visit me, quite out of breath, saying that he had only that moment arrived in town. A few minutes later I learned that he had come up the afternoon before, and that he had been seen at the theatre that same night.

A thousand incidents of the kind recurred to me; but one observation, which I was surprised to have been so long in making, struck me more forcibly still. I had introduced all my friends to Grimm, without exception; they had all become his. I had grown so inseparable from him that I should scarcely have wished to remain on visiting terms at any house where he was not accepted. There was only Mme de Créqui who refused to admit him, and her I almost gave up visiting from that moment. Grimm, for his part, made other friends, both on his own account and through the Count de Frièse. Of all those friends not a single one ever became mine; he never even said a word to suggest that I should so much as make their acquaintance; and of all those people whom I met at times in his rooms not a single one ever showed me the least goodwill, not even the Count de Frièse, in whose house he lived, and with whom it would consequently have been very pleasant for me to form some connexion, nor the Count de Schomberg, a relation of his, with whom Grimm was on still more intimate terms.

Furthermore, my own friends, whom I made his, and who had all been devotedly attached to me before knowing him, perceptibly changed their behaviour to me after that. He never introduced me to any of his friends. I introduced him to all mine, and finally he took them all away from me. If such is the fruits of friendship, what can be the fruits of hate?

Even Diderot, at the outset, several times warned me that though I placed so much confidence in Grimm he was not my friend. Sub-

sequently he changed his tone, when he had ceased to be a friend of mine also.

The means by which I had disposed of my children had required no one's assistance. I had, however, informed my friends of it, simply so that they should be informed, and that I should not appear in their eyes a better man than I was. These friends were three in number: Diderot, Grimm, and Mme d'Épinay. Duclos, who most deserved my confidence, was the only one to whom I did not give it. He knew nevertheless; I do not know who told him. It is hardly probable that Mme d'Épinay was guilty of this breach of confidence, for she knew that if I were to be equally disloyal – had I been capable of such action – I was in a position to take cruel revenge on her. There remained Grimm and Diderot, then so closely united in so many ways, especially against me, that the crime was more than likely a collaboration between them. I would wager that Duclos, to whom I did not tell my secret and who consequently was under no obligation to keep it, was the only one who did.

When Grimm and Diderot were planning to detach my women-folk from me they had tried to make him join in their schemes; but he had always scornfully refused. It was only subsequently that I learnt from him what had passed between them on this subject. But I earned sufficient at the time from Thérèse to see that there was some secret plan behind all this, and that they wanted to make arrangements for me if not against my wishes, certainly without my knowledge; or at least that they wanted to use Thérèse and her mother as instruments for some hidden purpose. All this was assuredly far from honest, and Duclos's opposition proves the point beyond controversy. Let anyone who will, believe that this was friendship.

Their alleged friendship was as disastrous to me abroad as at home. Their long and frequent conversations with Mme Le Vasseur lasting over several years had sensibly altered that lady's feelings for me, and this change was certainly not in my favour. What were they discussing then at their strange meetings? Why this deep mystery? Was this old woman's conversation agreeable enough to win her such great favour, and important enough to be made so great a secret of? Throughout the three or four years that these meetings had lasted, they had seemed quite ludicrous to me. But when I thought over them, I began to feel some astonishment. This astonishment would have turned to apprehension if I had known at the time what that woman was preparing against me.

In spite of Grimm's pretended zeal on my behalf, of which he made a public boast, though it was difficult to reconcile with the tone he adopted towards me when we were together, I gained nothing from it in any direction; and the sympathy which he pretended to feel for me tended rather to humiliate me than to assist me. He even deprived me, in so far as he could, of the resource I found in my chosen trade, by decrying me as a poor copyist; and I admit that here he was speaking the truth. But it was not his business to do so. He demonstrated that this was no joke by making use of another copyist himself and depriving me of every one of my customers whom he could. It might have been said that his plan was to make me depend on him and on his backing for my subsistence, and to cut off my means of support until I was reduced to that condition.

When I had considered all this, my reason at last silenced my old prejudice in his favour, which was still vocal. I came to the conclusion that his character was at least very suspicious and, as for his friendship, I decided that it was a lie. Then, having resolved to see him no more, I advised Mme d'Épinay of my decision, which I supported by several incontrovertible facts, which I have now forgotten.

She strongly opposed this decision, though she did not quite know how to answer the arguments on which I based it. She had not yet gone into league with him; but next day, instead of giving me a verbal explanation she sent me a very clever letter which they had composed together, and in which she made my suspecting him of treachery towards a friend into a crime, and urged me to make it up with him. That letter staggered me. In a conversation which we had later on, at which I found her better prepared than she had been on the first occasion, I allowed myself to be overcome and persuaded myself that my judgement might have been false; in which case I had really committed a grave injustice towards a friend, which I ought to remedy. In short, I did what I had already done several times with Diderot and with Baron d'Holbach; half of my own volition and half out of weakness: I made all the advances which I had the right to demand from him. I went to Grimm, like another George Dandin,* to offer him apologies for the wrongs he had done to me, trusting once more in the false belief, which has caused me to humiliate myself a thousand times before my self-styled friends – the belief that there is no hatred that cannot be disarmed by gentleness and honest

[* Character in Molière's comedy of that name: a peasant who married a grand lady.]

behaviour. Whereas, on the contrary, the hatred of wicked men is only increased by the impossibility of finding any justification for it; and the feeling of their own injustice is only an additional grievance against the object of their dislike. Without straying from my own story, I can adduce a very strong proof of this axiom in the cases of Grimm and Tronchin, who had become my two most implacable enemies entirely of their own volition, for the pleasure of it, and out of sheer caprice, though unable to adduce any wrong of any kind that I had ever done to either of them.* Yet their savagery grows from day to day, like that of tigers, from the ease with which they are able to satiate it.

I expected Grimm to be put out by my condescension and my advances, and to receive me with open arms and the friendliest affection. He greeted me like a Roman emperor, with a haughtiness that I have never seen in anyone else. I was not at all prepared for this welcome. When in my embarrassment at playing a part so ill-suited to me, I had sheepishly explained the purpose of my visit in very few words, before receiving me back into favour he most majestically treated me to a long harangue which he had prepared, and which included the lengthy enumeration of his rare virtues, chief of which was his capacity for friendship. He dwelt for some time on one point which at first struck me forcibly: that, as was well known, he always kept his friends. While he was talking I muttered to myself that it would be very unkind of me to make myself the only exception to this rule, and he returned to it so often and with such emphasis that I ended by thinking that, if in this he was merely obeying the promptings of his heart he would be less struck by the idea, and that he was merely using it as a device which he considered useful for his purposes of self-advancement. Up to that time I had been in the same situation, I had always kept all my friends; since my tenderest childhood I had never lost a single one, except by death, and yet I had not hitherto reflected on the subject. It was not a rule that I had prescribed for myself. Since this was an advantage which we possessed in common, why did he then boast of it as his alone, unless he was looking forward to robbing me of the right to make such a claim? He then pro-

* It was not until much later – long after he had declared his hostility to me, and stirred up cruel persecutions against me at Geneva and elsewhere – that I nicknamed the latter ‘The Juggler’. Indeed I very soon suppressed this name when I saw that I was completely a victim to him. Paltry vengeance is beneath me, and hatred has never gained a foothold in my heart.

ceeded to humiliate me by proving how much our common friends preferred him to me. I was as well aware of this preference as he. The question was by what right it had been won, whether through merit or skill, by raising himself or trying to push me down. In the end, when he had placed all the distance he could wish between himself and me, and quite sufficient to enhance the value of the favour he was about to grant me, he gave me the kiss of peace with a light embrace rather like the accolade conferred by the King on new-made knights. I was flabbergasted, I did not know what to say, I could not utter a word. The whole scene reminded me of a schoolmaster's reprimand to a pupil whom he is letting off a flogging. I never think of it without feeling how misleading are all judgements based on appearances, to which the vulgar attach such weight, and how often boldness and pride accompany guilt, while shame and embarrassment are the attributes of innocence. We were reconciled; and this at least was a relief to my feelings, which are always plunged into mortal anguish by quarrels. It will be obvious that a reconciliation of that kind did not change his behaviour; it merely deprived me of the right to complain of it. Therefore I made up my mind to endure everything and say no more.

So many distresses, one after another, threw me into a state of depression which hardly left me sufficient strength to regain my self-control. With no reply from Saint-Lambert, neglected by Mme d'Houdetot, and without the courage to take anyone else into my confidence, I began to fear that by making friendship the idol of my heart I had wasted my life in sacrifices to a chimera. The proof of it was that, out of all my friends I had only two men left who still possessed my full esteem, and in whom my heart could trust: Duclos, of whom I had lost sight since I had settled at the Hermitage, and Saint-Lambert. I felt that my only way of atoning for the wrongs I had done the latter would be by opening my heart to him unreservedly; and I resolved to make him a full confession of everything in so far as it did not compromise his mistress. I have no doubt that this decision was yet another trap set me by my infatuation in order to keep me closer to her. But I certainly should have thrown myself unreservedly into her lover's arms, have submitted myself wholly to his guidance, and have carried my frankness to the greatest possible extreme. Indeed I was on the point of writing him a second letter, to which I am sure he would have replied, when I learnt the sad cause of his failure to answer the first. He had been unable to withstand the rigours of that campaign to the end. Mme d'Épinay informed me that

he had just had a paralytic stroke; and Mme d'Houdetot, who had herself become ill with grief and was not in a fit state to write to me at the moment, sent me a message two or three days afterwards from Paris, where she had gone, to the effect that he was going to be moved to Aix-la-Chapelle to take the baths. I will not say that this news distressed me as it did her, but I wonder whether the weight I felt on my heart was less painful than her grief and tears. Sorrow at the news of his sad condition, aggravated by the fear that disquietude might have contributed to it, affected me more than anything that had happened to me till then, and I was cruelly conscious of my inability to find in my own self-esteem the fortitude necessary to withstand such a grief. Happily this generous friend did not leave me long in my depression; despite his seizure he did not forget me, and I very soon learnt that I had misjudged both his feelings and his condition. But it is time to come to the great revolution in my destiny, to the catastrophe which divided my life into two such different parts, and which from a trivial cause produced such terrible effects.

One day when I was least expecting it, Mme d'Épinay sent for me. As I went in, I saw in her eyes and in her whole face an uneasy expression, which particularly struck me since it was unusual in her. For no one in the world knew better than she how to control her face and her movements. 'My friend,' she said, 'I am leaving for Geneva. My chest is in a bad state, and my health is deteriorating so rapidly that I must abandon everything, and go to consult Tronchin.' This decision, so rapidly made and at the beginning of the bad weather, considerably astonished me because there had been no question of this when I had left her thirty-six hours before. I asked her whom she would take with her. She said, her son and M. de Linant, and then added carelessly: 'And you, my dear bear, won't you come too?' As I did not think she was speaking seriously, since she knew that in the approaching season of the year I was scarcely in a state to leave my room, I made some joke about the advantages of one sick person's company to another. She did not herself seem to have meant the proposal seriously, and no more was said about it. All we spoke about were the preparations for her journey, into which she entered with lively interest, having made up her mind to leave in a fortnight.

I did not need much penetration to realize that there was a hidden purpose in this journey, which was being kept from me. The secret, which was a secret for no one in the house but me, was discovered the very next day by Thérèse, to whom it was revealed by Tessier the

steward, who had it from the lady's maid. Although I do not owe it to Mme d'Épinay to keep this secret, since I did not learn it from her, it is too closely connected with those that she did tell me for me to make a distinction; so I shall preserve silence on this head. But these secrets, which have never escaped, and will never escape, from my mouth or pen, have become known to so many people that no one in Mme d'Épinay's circle can possibly be ignorant of them.

When I heard the real purpose of this journey I should have recognized the secret workings of some enemy's hand in this attempt to make me into Mme d'Épinay's escort. But as she had made so little effort to persuade me, I persisted in regarding her suggestion as no serious one, and merely laughed at the fine figure I should have cut if I had been so foolish as to undertake the errand. Besides, she gained considerably by my refusal, for she succeeded in persuading her husband himself to go with her.

Several days later I received from Diderot a note which I shall now transcribe. This note, which was simply folded in two, in such a way that all its contents could be read without difficulty, was addressed to me at Mme d'Épinay's and entrusted to M. de Linant, the son's tutor and the mother's confidant.

Diderot's Letter

(Packet A, No. 52)

I was fated to love you and to bring you trouble. I learn that Mme d'Épinay is going to Geneva, and I have not heard that you are to accompany her. My friend, if you feel warmly towards Mme d'Épinay, you must go with her, and if you do not you must go even more readily. If you are weighed down by your obligations towards her, here is a chance of partly discharging them and relieving your mind. Will you find any other occasion in your life for showing her your gratitude? She is going to a place where she will be like a stranger dropped from the clouds. She is ill; she will need amusement and distractions. And it is winter too. Just think, my friend. Your health may be a stronger objection than I suppose. But are you any worse to-day than you were a month ago, or than you will be at the beginning of spring? Will you make the journey in three months' time with any greater ease than to-day? For myself, I must say that if I could not bear a carriage I would take up a stick and follow her. And then are you not afraid that your behaviour may be misinterpreted? You will be suspected of ingratitude or of some other secret motive. I know that, whatever you do, the testimony of your conscience will always speak in your favour. But is that testimony alone sufficient? Is it permissible entirely to ignore the

opinion of others? I am writing this letter to fulfil an obligation towards you and towards myself. If it displeases you throw it in the fire, and pay no more attention to it than if it had never been written. Farewell, I love you and I embrace you.

I trembled with such rage and was so utterly astounded as I read this letter, that I could hardly get to the end. But this did not prevent me from observing the skill with which Diderot affected a milder, more affectionate, and franker tone than in any of his other letters, in which he simply addressed me as 'my dear', without condescending to call me 'friend'. I easily saw the indirect procedure by which this letter had reached me; its signature, its style, and the hands through which it had passed betrayed their underhand method clumsily enough. For we generally wrote to one another by the post or by the Montmorency messenger, and this was the first and only time he had used this channel.

When my first burst of indignation allowed me to write I hurriedly penned the following reply, and immediately took it from the Hermitage, where I then was, to La Chevrette, to show it to Mme d'Épinay, to whom in my blind anger I wanted to read it aloud, together with Diderot's letter.

My dear friend, you cannot know either the magnitude of my obligations to Mme d'Épinay, or the extent to which I am bound by them, or whether she really needs my company on her journey, or if she seriously wants me to go with her, or if it is possible for me to do so, or any reasons I may have for not doing so. I do not object to discussing all these points with you; but in the meanwhile, you must agree, my dear philosopher, that it is the height of rashness to prescribe so positively what I ought to do, without putting yourself in the position to judge. But what is still worse, as I see it, is that the advice you offer me is not your own. Not only am I very little disposed to let myself be led by some third or fourth party speaking in your name, but I detect in this tortuous procedure some underhand dealings that do not suit your frank nature and which you would do well, both for your own sake and mine, to avoid in future.

You are afraid that my conduct may be misinterpreted, but I defy a heart like yours to be so bold as to think ill of mine. Other people might perhaps speak better of me if I were more like them. God forbid that I should ever go out for their approval! The wicked may watch me and interpret my actions, but Rousseau was not born to fear them nor Diderot to listen to them.

You tell me to throw your letter in the fire, if it displeases me and pay

no more attention to it. Do you think that anything coming from you is so easy to forget? My dear Diderot, you care as little about my tears when you cause me such pain, as about my life and health when you recommend me to undertake such an exhausting task. If you could correct this fault in yourself your friendship would be sweeter to me, and I should be a less pitiable person.

When I entered Mme d'Épinay's room I found Grimm with her, and I was delighted. I read my two letters aloud to them in clear tones and with a boldness of which I should never have thought myself capable; and I added some words in conclusion which did not belie that boldness. I saw them both astounded and flabbergasted by this unexpected audacity in one who was usually so timid. They did not answer a word. I saw that arrogant man lower his gaze, lacking the courage to meet the fire in my eyes. But at the same time, in his secret heart he swore my undoing, and I am sure that they plotted it together before they parted.

It was at about this time that I received through Mme d'Houdetot, Saint-Lambert's letter (Packet A, No. 57) dated from Wolfenbüttel a few days after his accident, replying to mine, which had been long delayed on the road. His answer brought me some consolation, which I greatly needed at that moment, for it was full of tokens of esteem and friendship which gave me the strength and courage to deserve them. From that time onwards I behaved correctly. But it is certain that if Saint-Lambert had been less sensible and generous, if he had been a less honourable man, I should have been irretrievably lost.

The bad weather was setting in, and people were beginning to leave the country for the town. Mme d'Houdetot gave me the date on which she intended to come and say good-bye to the valley, and made an appointment to see me at Eaubonne. This chanced to be the same day on which Mme d'Épinay was leaving La Chevrette to go to Paris and complete her preparations for her journey. Fortunately she departed in the morning, and I had still time after I had left her to go and dine with her sister-in-law. I had Saint-Lambert's letter in my pocket, and I read it several times as I walked. It served me as a protection against my weakness. I made and kept my resolution to see nothing more in Mme d'Houdetot than a friend and the mistress of a friend, and I spent five or six hours alone with her in a calm delight infinitely preferable, even sensuously, to those paroxysms of burning fever from which I had hitherto suffered in her company. As she was well aware that my feelings had not changed she appreciated the

efforts I had made to conquer myself and they raised me in her esteem. I was delighted to see that her friendship for me was not dead. She told me that Saint-Lambert would soon be returning. For although he had made a fairly complete recovery from his attack, he was no longer strong enough to bear the fatigues of war, and was leaving the army to come and live quietly beside her. We made a charming plan for an intimate society of three, and we had reason to hope that, once formed, it would be lasting. For it would have been based on all those feelings that unite sensitive and honest people, and we had amongst the three of us sufficient talents and sufficient knowledge to stand in need of no help from outside. Alas, when I surrendered to the hope of so charming a life, I had no suspicion of what awaited me.

We afterwards spoke of my present relations with Mme d'Épinay. I showed her Diderot's letter together with my reply. I gave her all the details of what had transpired, and declared that I had resolved to leave the Hermitage. She opposed me vigorously, using arguments which had an all-powerful effect on my heart. She told me how much she would have liked me to make the Geneva journey, for she saw that she would inevitably be compromised by my refusal. Indeed Diderot's letter seemed to announce this in advance. However, as she knew my reasons as well as I did myself, she did not insist on the point, but implored me to avoid scandal at all cost, and to palliate my refusal by offering excuses sufficiently convincing to dispel the unjust suspicion that she could have any part in it. I replied that she was giving me no easy task; but that since I was resolved to atone for my ill-doing even at the price of my reputation, I would put hers before my own and endure everything that I honourably could. It will soon be seen whether I was able to keep my promise.

I can affirm that, far from my unhappy passion having lost any of its strength, I never loved my Sophie so keenly and so tenderly as I did that day. But such was the effect upon me of Saint-Lambert's letter, my feeling of duty, and my horror of treachery that throughout our conversation my senses left me in complete peace beside her, and I was not even tempted to kiss her hand. When I left she embraced me before the servants. This kiss, which was so different from those which I had sometimes stolen from her beneath the trees, proved to me that I had regained command over myself. I am almost positive that if my heart had had the time peacefully to regain its strength, it would not have taken me three months to be radically cured.

Here end my personal relations with Mme d'Houdetot: relations

which everyone has been able to judge superficially according to the nature of his own heart. Yet the passion inspired in me by this lovely woman, a passion perhaps stronger than any man has ever felt before, will always be honourable, in Heaven's eyes and our own, by reason of the rare and painful sacrifices made by us both to duty, honour, love, and friendship. We had too high an opinion of each other to be able easily to degrade ourselves. We should need to have been unworthy of all esteem to have been prepared to lose a mutual respect of such high value; and the very strength of the feelings which might have made us guilty was the reason for our remaining innocent.

In this way, after a long friendship for one of these two women and a violent affection for the other, I bade them my separate farewells on the same day. One of them I was never to see again in all my life, and the other only twice, on occasions which I shall describe hereafter.

After their departure I found myself somewhat at a loss how to fulfil so many urgent and contradictory duties, the consequences of my imprudence. If I had been in my normal position after the Geneva journey had been proposed and I had declined it, I should only have had to stay quiet, and there would have been no more to say. But I had foolishly made it into an affair that could not rest as it was, and I could only avoid further explanations by leaving the Hermitage, which I had just promised Mme d'Houdetot not to do, at least for the present. What is more, she had insisted on my making excuses to my so-called friends for having declined to go, so that she should not be blamed for my refusal. However, I could not adduce my real reason without insulting Mme d'Épinay, to whom I certainly owed some gratitude after all that she had done for me. All things considered, I found myself with the hard but unavoidable alternative of failing Mme d'Épinay, Mme d'Houdetot, or myself, and I chose the last. I chose it boldly, unreservedly, and unswervingly, and with a disinterestedness which surely deserved to blot out the faults which had reduced me to this extremity. This sacrifice, which my enemies knew how to turn to their advantage, and which they perhaps expected, has brought on the ruin of my reputation and, thanks to their efforts, it has robbed me of public esteem. But it has restored my self-respect, and consoled me in my misfortunes. This was not the last time, as will be seen, that I made such sacrifices, nor the last either that they have been used as a means of bringing me down.

Grimm was the only one who appeared to have taken no part in that affair and it was to him that I decided to turn. I wrote him a long

letter in which I explained the absurdity of their attempting to turn the journey to Geneva into a matter of duty for me; also how useless, how much of a burden indeed, I should have been to Mme d'Épinay, and what inconveniences would have resulted for myself. I did not resist the temptation in that letter of letting him see that I was not in the dark, and found it strange that the journey should be supposed to be a duty for me, whilst he was excused from it and his name not even mentioned in the matter. But being debarred from clearly stating my reasons, I was forced to wander frequently from the point in this letter, which would have made me seem guilty of many crimes in the public eye. But it was a model of discretion and reserve for those who, like Grimm, were aware of the facts which I did not mention, and which fully justified my conduct. I did not even hesitate to arouse a further prejudice against me, by attributing Diderot's opinion to my other friends, in order to insinuate that Mme d'Houdetot had shared it also, which was true, and by failing to mention that in face of my argument she had changed her mind. I knew no better way of exonerating her from any suspicion of having connived with me than that of appearing to be displeased with her on the subject.

The letter ended with a demonstration of confidence which would have moved any other man. For in begging Grimm to weigh my reasons and then to give me his opinion, I assured him that his advice would be followed, whatever it might be; and this was my intention even if he had pronounced that I ought to set out. For now that M. d'Épinay had undertaken to be his wife's escort, my going took on quite a different aspect, whereas in the first place it had been I who was to be entrusted with that duty and there had been no question of him till I had refused.

Grimm kept me waiting for his reply, which was a strange one; and I will transcribe it here. (See Packet A, No. 59.)

Mme d'Épinay's departure has been postponed; her son is ill and she must wait till he has recovered. I will think about your letter. Stay quietly at your Hermitage. I will send you my opinion in time. But as she is certainly not leaving for some days there is no hurry. In the meantime, if you think fit, you can make your proposals to her, although this does not seem to me a matter of any consequence. For as I know your position as well as you do yourself I have no doubt that she will answer your proposals as she should. So all that I think you can gain by them is to be able to say to anyone who taxes you that if you did not go it was not for want of having offered. For the rest, I do not see why you insist

that a philosopher should be the public's speaking-trumpet, or why you imagine that because he advises you to go all your friends are of the same opinion. If you write to Mme d'Épinay her reply may serve you as an answer to all those friends, since you are so very anxious to give them an answer. Good-bye: my regards to Mme Le Vasseur and the 'Judge'.*

I was quite astounded as I read this letter, and anxiously tried to imagine what it could mean; but in vain. Why instead of simply replying to mine must he take time to think about it, as if the time he had already taken had not been enough? He even informs me of the state of suspense in which he wishes to keep me, as if there were some deep problem to be solved, or as if it were his purpose to make it quite impossible for me to discover his feelings until the moment when he decides to reveal them to me! What is the significance of all these precautions, these delays, and mysteries? Is this the way to respond to a man's confidence? Is this the behaviour of an upright and loyal friend? I tried in vain to find some favourable interpretation of his conduct; I could find none. Whatever his purpose might be, if it was hostile his position made it easier for him to carry it out without its being possible for me in mine to put any obstacle in its way. Being a favourite in a great prince's house, with a wide circle of acquaintances, and setting the tone of the society to which we both belonged and of which he was the oracle, he could with his habitual skill easily deploy all his weapons; whilst I, alone in my Hermitage, far away from everything and with no one to advise me or any communication with the world, had no alternative but to wait and remain quiet. All I did was to write to Mme d'Épinay a studiously courteous letter on the subject of her son's illness. But I did not fall into the trap of offering to go with her to Geneva.

After waiting for ages in the cruel anxiety into which that barbarous man had plunged me I heard after eight or ten days that Mme d'Épinay had departed, and received a second letter from him. It was only seven or eight lines long, and I did not read it to the end. It announced a break, but in terms such as could be dictated only by the most infernal hatred, terms that by his endeavour to make them as offensive as possible seemed downright stupid. He forbade me his presence, as if he were banishing me from his kingdom. If only I could have read the letter rather more calmly I should have laughed

[* The Hanging Judge (Le Lieutenant criminel) was Mme Le Vasseur's nickname, but here it seems to be applied to Thérèse.]

loud. Without copying it or even reading it to the end I returned it to him immediately, accompanied by this:

I refused to listen to my just suspicions. At last I know you, but too late.

Here is the letter that took you so long to think out. I return it to you; it is not for me. You can show mine to every living soul, and hate me quite openly. That will be one falsehood the less on your part.

My telling him that he could show my previous letter related to a sentence in his which will reveal the deep cunning with which he acted throughout this affair.

I have said that in the eyes of the ill-informed my letter might lay me open to a good deal of reproach. This he saw with delight. But how could he avail himself of this advantage without compromising himself? If he showed that letter, he would expose himself to the accusation of abusing a friend's confidence.

To get himself out of that dilemma he decided to break with me in the most violent way possible, and make me conscious by his letter of the favour he did me in not showing mine. He was quite certain that in my furious indignation I should refuse his pretended discretion, and let him show my letter to everybody. That is precisely what he wanted. Everything fell out as he had arranged. He circulated my letter all round Paris with a commentary of his own devising which, however, did not prove as successful as he had expected. People did not consider that the permission he had extorted from me, to show my letter, exempted him from blame for having lightly taken me at my word in order to injure me. People continually asked what personal wrongs I had done him to justify such violent hatred. At last they came to the conclusion that even if I had done him such wrongs as compelled him to break with me, friendship, even though extinct, had still rights which he should have respected. But unfortunately Paris is a frivolous place; these judgements of the moment are quickly forgotten. The unfortunate are neglected when they are not at hand; the prosperous inspire respect by their mere presence. The game of abuse and intrigue is kept up and played afresh, and soon its effects, by their continuous novelty, efface all that has gone before.

Thus, after having deceived me for so long, that man finally threw off his mask, in the certainty that he had now carried things so far that he had no longer any need of it. Relieved of my fear of being unjust to the wretch, I left him to his own reflections, and gave him no more

thought. A week after the reception of his letter I received an answer from Mme d'Épinay, in Geneva, to my last letter. (Packet B, No. 10.) From its tone, which was one she had never used to me in all her life, I understood that the two of them were counting on the success of their manoeuvres, and working together. I saw that they looked on me as a lost man with no resources, and that they would devote themselves thenceforth to the safe pleasure of completing my discomfiture.

My condition was, indeed, as deplorable as could be. I saw all my friends desert me, and could not find out how or why. Diderot, who boasted of remaining faithful to me and of being the only one to do so, had been promising me a visit for three months, but did not come. Winter was beginning to set in, and with it came attacks of my usual complaints. My constitution, although vigorous, had not been able to withstand the onslaughts of so many conflicting passions, and I was in a state of collapse which left me neither the strength nor the courage to stand up to anything. Even if my promises, even if the continual remonstrances of Diderot and Mme d'Houdetot had allowed of my leaving the Hermitage at that moment, I did not know where to go or how to drag myself there. I remained stunned and motionless, unable either to act or to think. The mere idea of something to be done, of a letter to be written, of something to be said, set me trembling. I could not, however, leave Mme d'Épinay's letter unanswered, for that would be to acknowledge that I deserved the devastating treatment I was receiving from her and her friend. I made up my mind to inform her of my state of mind and my decisions, not doubting for a moment that out of humanity, generosity, and decency, and out of the good feeling that I believed I had seen in her, notwithstanding the bad – she would hasten to agree with me. Here is my letter:

The Hermitage, 23 November 1757

If it were possible to die of grief, I should no longer be alive. But at last I have made up my mind. Friendship between us is dead, Madame; but even a dead friendship has still some rights, which I know how to respect. I have not forgotten your kindnesses to me, and you can count on me for all the gratitude which it is possible for a man to feel towards one whom he can no longer love. Any further explanations would be useless; my conscience is on my side, and I leave you to yours.

I wanted to depart from the Hermitage, and I should have done so. But I am told that I must remain here till spring, and since my friends wish it I shall stay till spring, if you agree.

Once this letter was written and despatched my only thought was to live quietly at the Hermitage, looking after my health, trying to recover some strength, and making preparations for leaving in the spring without a fuss and without proclaiming a quarrel. But this was not what M. Grimm and Mme d'Épinay were counting on, as will be seen in a moment.

Some days later I had at last the pleasure of that visit from Diderot which he had so often promised and so often failed to pay me. It could not have been more opportune. He was my oldest friend; he was almost the only friend I had left, and under these circumstances the pleasure I felt on seeing him can be imagined. My heart was full, and I poured it out to him. I enlightened him upon a number of facts that had been kept from him, or had been disguised or invented. I told him as much as I had a right to tell him about all that had happened. I did not attempt to hide from him what he knew only too well – that a mad and unhappy passion had been the cause of my undoing. But I did not admit that Mme d'Houdetot knew of it or, anyhow, that I had declared it to her. I told him of Mme d'Épinay's mean endeavours to get possession of the very innocent letters her sister-in-law had written to me. I wished him to learn the details from the mouths of the persons she had attempted to suborn. Thérèse gave him an exact account. But imagine my feelings when her mother's turn came, and I heard her declare and affirm that she had no knowledge of anything of the sort! Those were her words, and she never budged from them. Not four days before she had repeated the tale to me, and now she contradicted me to my face in front of my friend! This seemed to me conclusive, and at that moment I was vividly aware of my foolishness in having kept such a woman with me for so long. I did not launch out into invectives against her; I hardly vouchsafed her a few contemptuous words. I felt the debt I owed to her daughter, whose unwavering honesty formed such a contrast to her mother's despicable cowardice. But from that time my mind was made up in regard to the old woman, and I only waited for the moment when I could carry out my resolve.

The moment came sooner than I had expected. On 10 December I received a reply to my last letter to Mme d'Épinay. Here are its contents (Packet B, No. 11):

Geneva, 1 December 1757

After having shown you for many years every possible evidence of friendship and sympathy, I have nothing left for you but pity. You are

a very unhappy man. I hope that your conscience is as quiet as mine. The peace of your future life will depend on its being so. Since you wanted to leave the Hermitage, and should have done so, I am surprised that your friends prevented you. For my part I never consult mine over matters of duty, and I have nothing more to say to you about yours.

A dismissal so unforeseen yet in such precise terms did not leave me a moment's hesitation. It was necessary to depart immediately, whatever the weather, just as I was, even if I had to sleep in the woods and on the snow that then covered the ground, and whatever Mme d'Houdetot might say or do. For I was willing to do anything to please her, short of incurring disgrace.

I found myself in the most terrible embarrassment that I have ever known in my life. But my mind was made up. I vowed that, whatever happened, I would not sleep at the Hermitage a week that day. I set about removing my possessions, resolved to leave them in the open fields rather than not surrender the keys on the eighth day; for I was particularly anxious that all should be over before a letter could be sent to Geneva and a reply received. I felt more courage in me than ever in my life. All my strength had come back. Honour and indignation, on which Mme d'Épinay had not reckoned, restored it to me. Fortune aided my boldness. M. Mathas, the Prince of Condé's prosecuting attorney, heard of my plight, and made me the offer of a little house of his, on his Mont-Louis estate at Montmorency. I accepted eagerly and with gratitude. The bargain was soon concluded; and I hastily bought a little furniture to supplement what we had already, so that Thérèse and I might have a bed to sleep on. I got my possessions transported on a cart with great trouble and at great expense; and despite the ice and snow my moving was completed in two days. On 15 December I surrendered the keys of the Hermitage, after having paid the gardener's wages, though unable to pay my rent.

As for Mme Le Vasseur, I informed her that we must now separate. Her daughter tried to shake me but I was inflexible. I sent her off to Paris in the post cart with all the furniture and possessions owned by her and her daughter in common. I gave her some money, and I promised to pay her lodging with her children or elsewhere, to provide for her keep for so long as I could, and never to leave her short of bread while I had any myself.

Finally, on the day after my arrival at Mont-Louis, I wrote the following letter to Mme d'Épinay:

Montmorency, 17 December 1757

Nothing could be simpler or more necessary, Madame, than to move out of your house when you no longer approve of my remaining there. On your refusing me permission to spend the rest of the winter at the Hermitage I departed, on the 15th of December. It has been my fate both to go there and to leave against my own wishes. I thank you for the stay which you persuaded me to make there, and my thanks would be greater if I had not paid so dearly for it. Indeed you are right in saying that I am unhappy; no one on earth can know better than you the extent of my unhappiness. For if it is a misfortune to blunder in the choice of one's friends, it is an equally painful one to awaken from so pleasant a dream.

Such is the true account of my stay at the Hermitage and of the reasons which led me to depart. I have not been able to cut this tale short, for it has been important to trace it in exact detail, this period in my life having had an influence upon the future which will extend to my dying day.

BOOK TEN

1758 Unwonted energy derived from a momentary agitation had enabled me to leave the Hermitage, but it deserted me once I was gone. No sooner was I established in my new home than violent and frequent attacks of my urinary retention were complicated by the fresh disability of a rupture, which had been bothering me for some time without my knowing what it was. Soon I was subject to bouts of great pain. My old friend Doctor Thierry came to see me and informed me of my condition. Probes, catheters, bandages, all the paraphernalia for the infirmities of age, collected around me, rudely informed me that one cannot have a young heart with impunity, once the body is no longer young. The fine weather did not restore my strength, and I spent the whole year 1758 in a state of exhaustion that made me think I was coming to the end of my career. I saw my last days draw near almost with eagerness. Cured of the vain dreams of friendship, detached from everything that had made me love life, now I could no longer see anything to make it even pleasant; all I could see was illness and suffering which deprived me of all enjoyment. I longed for the moment of freedom when I should escape from my enemies. But let us return to the sequence of events.

It seems that my departure for Montmorency disconcerted Mme d'Épinay. Probably she had not expected it. My sad condition, the severity of the weather, and my complete desertion by my friends, taken all together, led Grimm and her to believe that if they were to drive me to the last extremity they would reduce me to beg for mercy, and to descend to the lowest humiliations in order to be left in the refuge which honour required me to leave. I changed home so suddenly, however, that they had no time to forestall that move; and they had no alternative except to play double or quits, and either ruin me completely or attempt to bring me back. Grimm was for the former, but I think that Mme d'Épinay would have preferred the latter. I am judging by her reply to my last letter, in which she considerably softened the tone of her previous notes, and seemed to open the door for a reconciliation. Her long delay in answering – she kept me waiting a whole month – sufficiently indicates her difficulties in finding suitable phraseology, and the deliberation which it must have

cost her. She could not make any further advances without committing herself. But after her earlier letters and my abrupt departure from her house, one cannot help being struck by the care she took not to allow a single impolite word to slip into that letter. I will copy the whole of it, so that the reader may judge.

(Packet B, No. 23)

Geneva, 17 January 1758

Sir, I did not receive your letter of December 17th till yesterday. It was sent to me in a box with various other things which has been all this time on the way. I will only answer your postscript. The letter itself I do not clearly understand, and if we were in the position to discuss it I should be glad to attribute all that has happened to a misunderstanding. But to return to the postscript. You may remember, sir, our agreeing that the wages for the gardener at the Hermitage should be paid through you in order to make him feel that you were his master, and to avoid the ridiculous and unseemly scenes created by his predecessor. The proof of this is that his first quarter's wages were sent to you. Furthermore I arranged with you a few days before I left that you should be reimbursed for the money you had advanced him. I know that you made some difficulty at first. But it was at my request that you made these advances, and it was natural that I should repay them. On this we agreed. Cahouet informs me that you have refused to accept the money. There is surely some muddle about this, and I have given orders that it shall be offered you again. I cannot see why you should want to pay my gardener despite our agreement, and beyond the time of your residence at the Hermitage. I feel sure, sir, that you will recollect what I have the honour to remind you of, and will not refuse to be repaid for the advance you so kindly made on my behalf.

Being no longer able to trust Mme d'Épinay after all that had happened, I did not wish to renew my relations with her. So I did not reply to that letter, and our correspondence ended there. Seeing that I had made up my mind, she did the same; and adopting the viewpoint of Grimm and the Holbach clique, she added her efforts to theirs in an endeavour to sink me completely. Whilst they worked in Paris, she worked at Geneva; and Grimm, who was to join her there later, completed what she had begun. Tronchin, whom they had no difficulty in winning over, gave them powerful support, and became the most remorseless of my persecutors, without my ever having given him the least cause for complaint, any more than I had to Grimm. All three together secretly sowed the seed in Geneva, the harvest of which was seen four years later.

They had greater difficulty in Paris, where I was better known and where people's hearts were less prone to hatred, and therefore less easily infected by it. In order to place their blows more scientifically they began to spread the story that it was I who had broken with them. (See Deleyre's letter, Packet B, No. 30.) From there, still under the pretence of being my friends, they cunningly put about their malicious accusations in the form of complaints against the injustice of their friend. People were thus put off their guard, and became more inclined to listen to them and blame me. The secret accusations of treachery and ingratitude were spread more cautiously, and were for that reason even more effective. I knew that they charged me with heinous crimes, but I never could learn what they alleged them to be. All that I could deduce from public rumour was that they could be reduced to these four capital offences: (1) my retirement to the country; (2) my love for Mme d'Houdetot; (3) my refusal to accompany Mme d'Épinay to Geneva; (4) my leaving the Hermitage. If they added any other grievances they took such careful precautions that it has been quite impossible for me ever to learn in what they consisted.

It is from this time that I think I can date the formation of a system, subsequently adopted by those who control my destiny with such rapid and progressive success that it would seem a miracle to anyone who does not know how easily anything can establish itself that favours the malignity of man. I must try to explain in a few words so much of these deep and dark schemes as is visible to my eyes.

Though my name was already famous and known throughout Europe, I had preserved the simplicity of my early tastes. My mortal hatred for everything that went by the name of party, faction, or cabal had kept me free and independent, without any bonds but the affections of my heart. Alone, a foreigner, isolated, without family or backing, holding to nothing but my principles and my duties, I fearlessly followed the paths of uprightness, neither flattering nor favouring anyone at the expense of justice and truth. Besides, having spent the last two years in solitary retirement without receiving any news, out of touch with worldly affairs, and with no knowledge or curiosity about anything, I lived, although only twelve miles from Paris, as deeply sundered from the capital by my own lack of interest as I was by sea from the isle of Tinian.*

Grimm, Diderot, d'Holbach, on the other hand, at the heart of the whirlpool, moved freely in the fashionable world and divided almost

[* One of the Ladrone group in the Pacific.]

all its circles between them. When they acted together they could make themselves heard by everybody: great men, wits, men of letters, lawyers, and women. It must already be clear what an advantage that position gives to three men united against a fourth placed as I was. It is true that Diderot and d'Holbach were not – at least I cannot believe that they were – men to weave dark plots: Diderot had not the malice,* nor d'Holbach the brains; but that made them a more effective combination. Grimm alone formed a plan in his head, and revealed so much of it to the other two as they needed to see in order to play their part in its execution. The influence he had gained over them made this co-operation easy, and the total effect corresponded to the superiority of his talents.

It was thanks to this superiority of his talents that, seeing the advantage which he could derive from our respective positions, he formed the plan of utterly destroying my reputation, and endowing me with an entirely opposite one, yet without compromising himself. His first move was to raise all around me an atmosphere of darkness which I should be unable to penetrate, in order to throw light on his manoeuvrings and unmask him.

This enterprise was difficult. For it was necessary to hide its full iniquity from the eyes of those who were to take part in it. It was necessary to deceive decent people, to alienate everyone from me, and not to leave me a single friend, small or great. Indeed he must prevent so much as one word of truth from reaching me. If just one generous man had come to me and said: 'You are behaving virtuously, but look how you are being treated, and this is the evidence on which you are being judged. What have you to say?' Truth would have triumphed and Grimm would have been lost. He knew it; but he had sounded his own heart and did not rate men above their true value. I am sorry, for the honour of humanity, that his calculations were so accurate.

In these underground workings his steps had to be slow to be sure. He has been pursuing his plan for twelve years, and the most difficult part is still to do – to deceive the entire public. There are still eyes who have watched him more closely than he thinks. He is afraid of this and dare not expose his machinations to the light.† But he has found

* I confess that since this book was written, what I have glimpsed through the darkness that surrounds me makes me fear that I did not know Diderot.

† Since this was written he has come into the open with the most complete and inconceivable success. I believe that it is Tronchin who gave him the courage and the means to do so.

a very simple way of bringing his power to bear, and that power has settled me. With this to support him, he is now advancing with less danger. Since the satellites of power generally set very little store by uprightness and even less by plain speaking, he has hardly anything to fear from any indiscretion by some honest man. What is most important to him is that I shall be surrounded by impenetrable darkness and that his machinations shall always be concealed from me. For he is well aware that however artfully he may have woven the skein it will never stand up to my gaze. His great skill lies in his appearing to humour me while all the time maligning me, and thus giving his perfidy the appearance of generosity.

I felt the first effects of this system through the secret accusations of the Holbach clique, although I could not possibly find out or even guess what the nature of these accusations was. Deleyre told me in his letters that I was being charged with disgraceful actions; and Diderot repeated the same thing in a more mysterious way. But when I entered into discussions with them both, the whole thing boiled down to the four heads of charges already noted. I felt a gradual cooling off in Mme d'Houdetot's letters. I could not attribute this chilliness to Saint-Lambert, who continued to write to me in as friendly a way as ever, and who even came to see me on his return. I could not attribute the cause to myself either, for we had parted on very good terms and, for my part, I had done absolutely nothing since then except leave the Hermitage, which she had herself considered a necessary step. Not knowing, therefore, what to make of this growing coolness, I was thoroughly upset. I knew that she was extremely careful to humour her sister-in-law and Grimm because of their relations with Saint-Lambert, and I was afraid of their machinations. These fears reopened my wounds, and made our correspondence so tempestuous that she grew tired of it. I glimpsed a thousand cruel possibilities, but could make nothing out distinctly. I was in the most unbearable position for a man whose imagination is easily set working. If I had been entirely isolated, if I had known nothing at all, I should have grown calmer. But my heart clung still to attachments which gave my enemies countless holds upon me; and the feeble rays that penetrated to my retreat served only to show me the darkness of the mysteries which were hidden from me.

These most cruel torments were too much for my free and open nature, which entirely prevents my concealing my own feelings, but at the same time makes me fear the worst from those which are con-

cealed from me. Indeed I should have succumbed, I have no doubt, had not other matters arisen sufficiently interesting to stir my feelings and give them a healthy diversion from the subjects with which I was unwillingly obsessed. On his last visit to me at the Hermitage, Diderot had told me about the article on Geneva, which d'Alembert had put in the *Encyclopaedia*.

This he informed me was part of a plan concerted with certain Genevese of high rank for the purpose of setting up a theatre in the city, as a result of which certain measures had been taken, and it would not be long before it was carried out. As Diderot seemed to approve of all this and to have no doubts about its success, and as I had too many other things to discuss with him to enter into a dispute on this point, I said nothing. But I resented these sly preparations to corrupt my country, and waited impatiently for the volume of the *Encyclopaedia* containing this article, to see if there was not some way of answering it that would ward off their wretched attack. I received the volume shortly after I had moved to Mont-Louis, and I found that the article had been framed with great skill and cunning, and was worthy of the pen from which it came. This did not deter me, however, from my intention of answering it; and despite my present prostration, my sickness and grief, the severity of the weather, and the discomfort of my new dwelling, in which I had not yet had time to settle down, I set to work with a zeal that overrode all obstacles.

During this somewhat hard winter, in the month of February and in the state of health that I have already described, I spent two hours of every morning and every afternoon in an open turret at the bottom of the garden in which my house stood. This turret, which was at the end of a terraced walk, looked out over the valley and pond of Montmorency, on to a distant view of the plain but considerable château of Saint-Gratien, the retreat of the virtuous Catinat.* It was on this spot, at that time freezingly cold and with no protection from the wind and snow that, with no other fire but that in my heart, I wrote in the space of three weeks my *Letter to d'Alembert on the Theatre*. This was the first of my works – for *Julie* was not then half finished – which I found any delight in writing. Previously it had been virtuous indignation that inspired me; this time it was warmth and gentleness of spirit instead. I had been annoyed by injustices of which I had only been a spectator; I had been saddened by those which were directed against me; and that sadness, free from all bitterness, was only

[* Nicolas de Catinat, one of Louis XIV's marshals.]

the sadness of a too loving and tender heart which had been deceived by those whom it had believed to be of its own kind, and had been forced to retire within itself. Full of all that had just happened to me, still shaken by so much violent emotion, my heart mingled feelings of its own sufferings with the thoughts aroused in me by consideration of my subject. Unconsciously I described my situation of the moment; I portrayed Grimm, Mme d'Épinay, Mme d'Houdetot, Saint-Lambert, and myself. What delighted tears I shed as I wrote! Alas, there are proofs enough in that letter that love, that fatal love of which I was violently trying to cure myself, still remained in my heart. With all this was mingled a certain self-pity, for I felt that I was dying and believed that I was bidding the public my last farewell. Far from fearing death, I watched its coming joyfully. But I was reluctant to leave my fellow men before they had learnt my true worth, before they knew how deserving I should have appeared of their love if they had known me better. Such are the secret causes of the singular tone which pervades this work, and which offers so striking a contrast to the tone of its predecessor.*

After revising this letter I made a fair copy of it, and I was preparing to have it printed when I received a communication from Mme d'Houdetot which plunged me into fresh grief, more painful than I had yet suffered. She informed me in her letter (Packet B, No. 34) that my love for her was known throughout Paris; that I must have talked about it to people who had made it public; that the news had come to her lover's ears, and almost cost him his life; that in the end he had accepted her story and they had become reconciled; but that she owed it to him, as well as to herself and the care for her reputation, to break off all relations with me. She assured me at the same time that neither she nor he would ever cease to be interested in my welfare, that they would defend me in public and that she would send from time to time for news of me.

'And you too, Diderot!' I exclaimed. 'Unworthy friend . . .' I could not, however, make up my mind to condemn him yet. My passion was known to others besides, who might have talked of it. I preferred to remain in doubt . . . but soon I could do so no longer. Shortly after this Saint-Lambert performed an act characteristic of his generosity. Knowing my mind so well, he realized the state I must be in, betrayed by one set of my friends and abandoned by the other, and came to see me. On the first occasion he had not much time to

* *The Address on Human Inequality.*

give me, but he came again. Unfortunately I did not expect him, and was not at home. Thérèse, who was, had a conversation with him lasting for more than two hours, in which they exchanged a number of facts which it was of great importance for both of us to know. The surprise with which I learned from him that no one in society doubted my having lived with Mme d'Épinay on the same terms as Grimm now did was only equalled by his surprise on learning the utter falseness of this rumour. To that lady's displeasure, he was now in the same position as I; and the full explanations that resulted from this conversation finally extinguished in me all regret for having irremediably broken with her. On the subject of Mme d'Houdetot, he informed Thérèse of certain circumstances unknown to her and even to that lady herself, but known to me and told by me to Diderot alone under the seal of friendship. And it had been Saint-Lambert himself whom Diderot had chosen to pass them on to. This finally decided me, and I resolved to break with Diderot for ever. All that remained to consider was the way of doing it. For I had observed that secret ruptures always turned to my disadvantage, since they left my cruellest enemies possessed of the mask of friendship.

The world's conventional rules on this matter seem to have been dictated by the spirit of falsehood and treachery. To appear still to be a man's friend when one has ceased to be so is to reserve the means of injuring him unbeknown to honest men. I recalled how when the famous Montesquieu broke with Father de Tournemine, he hastened to announce it openly, by saying to everyone: 'Do not listen to Father de Tournemine or to me if we talk about one another, for we have stopped being friends.' His conduct was universally applauded. Everyone praised his honesty and generous spirit. I resolved to follow his example with Diderot. But how from my retirement could I authentically announce our break and yet not risk a scandal? I decided to insert in my new book, in the form of a note, a passage from the Book of Ecclesiasticus announcing our rupture and even its causes, in terms sufficiently clear for anyone in the know, yet quite meaningless for the rest of the world. I took care, moreover, never to allude to the friend I was renouncing except with the respect due to friendship under all circumstances, even when it is dead. All this may be seen in the work itself.

Everything in this world is a matter of luck, and in adversity, it seems, any act of courage is a crime. The same behaviour which had been admired in Montesquieu brought me nothing but blame and

reproaches. As soon as my work was printed and I had copies, I sent one to Saint-Lambert, who had written me on the day before in his name and Mme d'Houdetot's a letter full of the tenderest friendship. (Packet B, No. 37.) He sent me back my copy accompanied by the following letter (Packet B, No. 38):

Eaubonne, 10 October 1758

Really, sir, I cannot accept the present you have sent me. When I came to the page in the preface where you quote a passage from Ecclesiastes (he was mistaken, it is from Ecclesiasticus) with reference to Diderot, the book fell from my hands. After our conversations this summer you seemed to me convinced that Diderot was innocent of the indiscretions of which you had thought him guilty. He may have wronged you, I do not know, but I do know that this does not give you the right to insult him publicly. You are not unaware of the persecutions to which he is subjected, and now you add the voice of an old friend to the shouts of the envious. I cannot conceal from you, sir, my disgust at such disgraceful behaviour. I am not on visiting terms with Diderot, but I respect him, and I resent the pain that you are giving to a man whom, in conversation with me, you have never accused of anything more than some slight weakness. Sir, we differ too greatly on principles ever to agree. Forget my existence; it should not be difficult. I have never done men either good or harm that is remembered for long. I promise you, sir, for my part, to forget your person and remember only your talents.

I was equally grieved and indignant as I read that letter, and in the excess of my unhappiness I recovered my pride sufficiently to reply to him as follows:

Montmorency, 11 October 1758

When I read your letter I paid you the compliment of being surprised, and I was foolish enough to be moved by it; but I find it unworthy of a reply.

I have no wish to continue my copying for Mme d'Houdetot. If she does not care to keep what she has she can send it back to me, and I will return her money. If she keeps it, she will have to send for the rest of her paper and money. I beg her to return to me at the same time the prospectus which is in her keeping. Farewell, sir.

Courage under misfortune annoys the cowardly but delights all generous spirits. This letter seems to have made Saint-Lambert reflect. He appeared to be sorry for what he had done but, being too proud to admit it openly, he seized, or perhaps contrived, a means of softening

the blow he had dealt me. A fortnight later I received the following letter from M. d'Épinay (Packet B, No. 10):

Thursday the 26th

Sir, I have received the book you were so kind as to send me, and read it with the same great pleasure as I always feel in reading anything that has come from your pen. Please accept my warmest thanks. I would have come and brought them to you myself if business had permitted of my staying for a while as your neighbour. But I have been at La Chevette very little this year. M. and Mme Dupin are coming to dine with me there next Sunday. I hope that M. de Saint-Lambert, M. de Francueil and Mme d'Houdetot will be of the party; you would be giving me a real pleasure if you would join us. Everybody who will be there is anxious to see you, and all will be delighted to share with me the pleasure of spending part of the day with you. I have the honour to be, with all esteem etc.

This letter made my heart beat cruelly. After having been the talk of Paris for the last year, the idea of making a spectacle of myself before Mme d'Houdetot made me tremble, and I found it difficult to summon sufficient courage to face the ordeal. However, since she and Saint-Lambert wished it, since M. d'Épinay spoke for all his guests and mentioned nobody whom I would not be glad to see, I did not feel that, all things considered, I should be compromising myself by accepting an invitation to dinner which was, in a way, sent me by the whole company. I accepted therefore. The weather was bad that Sunday, but Mme d'Épinay sent her carriage for me, and I went.

My arrival made a sensation. I have never received a more cordial welcome. It was as if all the party felt how greatly I needed to be put at my ease. None but the French have hearts capable of this kind of delicacy. I found more people there, however, than I had expected; among others the Count d'Houdetot, whom I did not know at all, and his sister Mme de Blainville, whose company I could have dispensed with. She had come to Eaubonne several times in the previous year, and her sister-in-law had often kept her bored and at a loose end during our solitary walks. She harboured a resentment against me, therefore, which she took great joy in gratifying during that dinner. For it may be guessed that, with Count d'Houdetot and Saint-Lambert present, the laughter generally went against me; nor can a man embarrassed by the simplest conversation be expected to have been very brilliant on an occasion like that. I have never suffered so

much, nor cut a worse figure, nor received more unexpected attacks. At last when we rose from table, I escaped from that shrew, and was delighted to see Saint-Lambert and Mme d'Houdetot coming towards me. We talked together for a part of the afternoon on indifferent topics, it is true, but with the same familiarity as before my infatuation. This friendliness was not lost on me, and if Saint-Lambert had been able to look into my soul he would have been content. I can affirm that although the first sight of Mme d'Houdetot set my heart beating so fast that I almost fainted, as I went away I scarcely gave her a thought; my mind was entirely taken up with Saint-Lambert.

Notwithstanding Mme de Blainville's sarcastic spite that dinner did me a great deal of good, and I congratulated myself heartily on not having refused the invitation. It had shown me not only that the intrigues of Grimm and the Holbach clique had not alienated my old friends from me,* but something still more gratifying, that Mme d'Houdetot and Saint-Lambert were less changed in their feelings than I had supposed; and I at last understood that it was rather jealousy than contempt that led him to keep her away from me. This consoled and calmed me. Sure now that I was not an object of scorn to those I esteemed, I worked more courageously and with more success on my own feelings; and if I did not succeed in entirely extinguishing a guilty and unfortunate passion, I at least got what remained of it so well under control that it has never caused me to commit a single error since that time. My copying for Mme d'Houdetot, which she persuaded me to resume, and my works, which I continued to send her as they appeared, still drew from her occasional letters and messages of slight importance but always polite. She went even further, as will be seen hereafter; and our behaviour to one another, when our relations had ceased, may serve as an example of the way in which decent people can part when it no longer suits them to see one another.

Another advantage that I gained from that dinner was that it was talked about in Paris, and that it served as an irrefutable answer to the rumour which my enemies were spreading everywhere, to the effect that I had mortally quarrelled with the whole company, and particularly with M. d'Épinay. On leaving the Hermitage I had written him a very polite letter of thanks, to which he had replied no less politely; and mutual civilities never ceased between us, or between me

*Or so I still thought, in the simplicity of my heart when I wrote my *Confessions*.

and his brother, M. de Lalive, who even came to see me at Montmorency and sent me his engravings. I have never been on bad terms with any member of that family except Mme d'Houdetot's two sisters-in-law.

My *Letter to d'Alembert* met with great success. All my works had been well received, but this success was particularly valuable to me. For it taught the public to mistrust the Holbach clique. When I went to the Hermitage they had predicted with their usual self-assurance that I should not stay there three months. When they saw that I stayed twenty and that when I was forced to leave I again chose a country dwelling, they maintained that it was out of pure obstinacy; that I was deadly bored in my solitude, but that I was so eaten up with pride that I would rather perish as a victim of my own obstinacy than retract and return to Paris. My *Letter to d'Alembert* breathed a gentleness of spirit which people felt was not affected. If I had been eaten up by ill-humour in my retreat my style would have revealed it. Ill-humour prevailed in everything I had written in Paris; but it prevailed no longer in this first thing I had written in the country. For any one capable of observation this fact was decisive. Clearly I had returned to my element.

However, this same work, full of gentleness though it was, thanks to my usual clumsiness and my bad luck made me a new enemy among men of letters. I had been introduced to Marmontel at M. de La Popelinière's, and our acquaintance had been maintained at the Baron's. At that time Marmontel was editor of the *Mercure de France*. As I had too much pride to send my works to writers for periodicals, and wanted to send him this without his imagining that it came to him as editor, or so that it might receive a notice in the *Mercure*, I wrote on his copy that it was not intended for the editor of the *Mercure* but for M. Marmontel. I thought I was paying him a very fine compliment; he read it as a cruel insult and became my irreconcilable enemy. He wrote against this letter of mine quite politely yet with an easily discernible venom; and from that day he has never missed an opportunity of injuring me in society, or of punishing me indirectly in his works. So difficult is it to humour the very touchy self-love of men of letters, and so careful must one be to leave no word in the compliments one makes them that can have the last appearance of ambiguity.

1759 Relieved from anxiety on all scores, I profited by the leisure and independence of the moment to resume my writing with greater regularity. That winter I finished *Julie*, and sent it to Rey, who had it printed in the following year. This work, however, suffered one more interruption from a trivial but rather unpleasant incident. I heard that they were arranging at the Opera for a revival of *The Village Sorcerer*. Outraged at the thought of those people arrogantly disposing of my property, I again looked up the memoir that I had sent to M. d'Argenson, which had remained unanswered and, after revising it, I sent it by M. Sellon, the Genevese resident, with a letter which he was kind enough to take charge of, to Count de Saint-Florentin, who had taken M. d'Argenson's place in the control of the Opera. That gentleman promised a reply, but sent none. Duclos, whom I informed of what I had done, mentioned it to the management, who offered to restore me not my opera but my free pass, which was now of no use to me. Seeing that I had no expectation of justice from any quarter, I gave the affair up, and the directors of the Opera continued to treat *The Village Sorcerer* as their own property and to make a profit on it, although it most incontestably belongs to no one but me.*

Since I had shaken off the yoke of my oppressors I led a fairly uneventful and peaceful life. Deprived of the charms of violent affection, I was relieved also of the weighty chains they impose.

Disgusted with my protectors and friends who wanted to take absolute control of my destiny, and to subject me to their pretended kindnesses against my will, I was resolved to confine myself for the future to relationships of simple goodwill, which far from encroaching on one's freedom constitute the real pleasure of life, and are founded on a basis of true equality. I had sufficient friendships of this kind to enable me to enjoy the charms of society without submitting to dependence on it, and as soon as I had tasted this kind of life I felt that, at my age, it suited me to end my days in peace, far from the storms, quarrels, and botherations in which I had just been half submerged.

During my stay at the Hermitage and since my move to Montmorency I had made several acquaintances in the neighbourhood, which I found pleasant and which subjected me to no obligations. Chief among them was young Loyseau de Mauléon, who was just

* It now belongs to them by a new agreement which they made with me quite recently.

beginning at the Bar and had no idea to what an eminence he would attain there. I was in no doubt, however, and soon pointed out to him the illustrious career which he can be seen to be following to-day. I prophesied to him that if he was particular in his choice of briefs and only pleaded in defence of justice and virtue, his talents would benefit by the loftiness of his principles and he would become the equal of the finest orators. He has followed my advice, and felt the benefit of it. His defence of M. de Portes is worthy of Demosthenes. He used to come every year to spend his vacation a mile from the Hermitage, at Saint-Brice, on the estate of Mauléon, his mother's property, where the great Bossuet once lived. It was an estate that could hardly have sustained a succession of such owners in their old noble grandeur.

In the same village of Saint-Brice I also knew Guérin the bookseller, a man of wit and learning, and a pleasant person high up in his trade. He introduced me to Jean Néaulme, an Amsterdam bookseller, his correspondent and friend, who eventually printed *Émile*. Nearer even than Saint-Brice, I had M. Maltor, the vicar of Grosley, who was cut out to be a statesman and minister rather than a village priest, and who would have received at least a diocese to rule if positions went by talents. He had been secretary to the Count du Luc, and a close friend of Jean-Baptiste Rousseau. His esteem for the memory of that illustrious exile was as great as his loathing for the rascally Saurin, who had ruined him; and he knew a number of curious anecdotes about them both which Séguy had not put into his still unpublished life of Rousseau. M. Maltor assured me that, far from having cause to complain of him, the Count du Luc had retained the warmest friendship for the poet to the end of his life. M. Maltor had been given this very pleasant retreat by M. de Vintimille after his patron's death. In the past he had been employed in a number of affairs, which he remembered perfectly despite his age and about which he talked very well. His conversation was as instructive as it was entertaining, and not at all like a village priest's. He combined the air of a man of the world with the learning of a scholar. Of all my permanent neighbours he was the one whose society I found most pleasant and whom I most regretted leaving.

There were also at Montmorency the Fathers of the Oratory, among them Father Berthier, the professor of physics, whom I liked for a certain air of geniality that I found in him beneath his slight veneer of pedantry. It was difficult, however, to reconcile his extreme simplicity with the determination and adroitness he displayed in push-

ing himself everywhere, among the great, the ladies, the religious, and the philosophers. He knew how to be all things to all men. I found great pleasure in his company, and talked about him to everybody. Apparently what I said came back to him. For one day he thanked me with a half laugh for having found him such a good fellow. I noticed something sardonic in his smiling face that totally altered it in my eyes, and the memory of which has often recurred to me since then. I cannot find a better comparison for his smile than with Panurge's when he is buying Dindenaut's sheep.* Our acquaintance had begun shortly after my arrival at the Hermitage, where he often came to see me. I had already settled at Montmorency when he left to return and live in Paris. There he often saw Mme Le Vasseur. One day quite unexpectedly he wrote to me on that lady's behalf, to inform me that M. Grimm had offered to support her, and to ask my permission to accept his offer. This, I understood, consisted of a pension of three hundred *livres*, and Mme Le Vasseur was to come and live at Deuil, between La Chevrette and Montmorency. I will not describe the impression that this news made on me; it would have been less surprising if Grimm had had an income of ten thousand *livres*, or any more comprehensible relationship with the woman, and if it had not been considered such a crime in me to have taken her into the country. For now he intended to take her back, as if she had grown younger since she left. I realized that the good old lady was only asking my permission, which she could have dispensed with if I had refused it, so as not to risk the loss of what I gave her. Although Grimm's charity seemed to me most extraordinary, it did not strike me as much at the time as it has done since. But even if I had known all that I have since discovered I should nevertheless have given my consent, as I did, and was bound to do unless I were to outbid his offer. Since that time I have been somewhat cured of my belief in Father Berthier's geniality of which I had once heedlessly accused him, to his considerable amusement.

This same Father Berthier enjoyed the acquaintance of two men who sought to make mine, I do not know for what reason, for we had certainly very few tastes in common. They were nobody's children, of whose nationality and family no one knew, nor probably did they use their real names. They were Jansenists and were supposed to be

[* Panurge outwitted the merchant in a crooked bargain, and chose his best sheep and threw it into the sea. It was followed by the whole flock, who carried Dindenaut with them. See Rabelais's *Pantagruel*, Book IV, chapters 6 and 7.]

priests in disguise, perhaps because of their absurd habit of carrying long swords, from which they were never parted. The prodigious secrecy in which they enveloped all their proceedings gave them the appearance of party managers, and I have always been convinced that they edited the *Ecclesiastical Gazette*. One of them was tall, benevolent, and unctuous, and called himself M. Ferrand; the other was short and thickset, fussy, and punctilious; he went by the name of M. Minard. They addressed one another as cousins. They lived in Paris with d'Alembert, at Mme Rousseau's, his nurse, and they had taken some rooms at Montmorency where they spent their summers. They kept house for themselves without a servant or a runner, taking it in turns each week to go out for the provisions, to do the cooking, and clean the place. In other ways they lived fairly well, and we sometimes had meals with one another. I do not know why they bothered about me. For my part, I was only interested in them because they played chess, and to get one short game I sometimes endured four hours of boredom. Because they thrust themselves into all companies and tried to take a hand in everything, Thérèse called them 'the old women', and this name has stuck to them at Montmorency.

These, together with my landlord M. Mathas, who was a good fellow, were my principal country acquaintances. I still had enough left in Paris to be able to live pleasantly there, if ever I chose, outside the circle of men of letters, among whom only Duclos was my friend. For Deleyre was still too young; and although once he had a close view of the philosophical clique's behaviour towards me he had completely severed connexion with them – or at least I thought so – I still could not forget how ready he had been to come to me as the spokesman of all that tribe.

In the first place I had my old and respected friend M. Roguin. He was a friend from the good old days, whom I had not won by my writings but by my person, and whose friendship for that reason I have always kept. I had the good Lenieps, my compatriot, and his daughter, who was then living with Mme Lambert. I had a young Genevese called Coindet, who seemed to me a good lad, careful, obliging, and eager, but who was in fact ignorant, credulous, greedy, and presumptuous. He had come to visit me at the beginning of my stay at the Hermitage and, though he had acted as his own introducer, he had soon established himself in my unwilling favour. He had some taste for drawing and knew the artists. He was of service to me in the matter of the illustrations for *Julie*, for which he undertook to

look after the drawings and plates, and performed his task most successfully.

M. Dupin's house was open to me; and though not so brilliant as in Mme Dupin's heyday, it was still one of the best houses in Paris, thanks to the distinction of its host and hostess and the choice of company that assembled there. As I had never put anyone before them, and had only left them in order to lead an independent life, they had not ceased to look on me with friendship, and I was always sure of a good reception from Mme Dupin. I could even count her as one of my country neighbours since they had set up an establishment at Clichy, where I sometimes went to spend a day or two, and where I should have gone more often if Mme Dupin and Mme de Chenonceaux had lived on better terms. But the difficulty of dividing my attentions in the same house between two women out of sympathy with one another made Clichy too trying for me. Being on more equal and familiar terms with Mme Chenonceaux, I enjoyed the pleasure of her society under less awkward conditions at Deuil, almost at my door, where she had rented a small house, and at home too where she quite often came to see me.

I had Mme de Créqui, who had taken to religion and given up seeing the d'Alemberts, the Marmontels, and most of the men of letters, with the exception, I think, of Abbé Trublet, then something of a sanctimonious hypocrite, of whom she was already rather tired. Me she had sought out, and I have never lost her goodwill; we have always kept up a correspondence. She sent me fat pullets from Le Mans as a New Year's present, and her plans were made for coming to see me in the next year when a journey of Mme de Luxembourg's cut across hers. I owe her a place to herself here, for she will always occupy a distinguished place in my memories.

I also had a friend whom I should put first in the list after Roguin: my old colleague de Carrio, formerly titular secretary to the Spanish embassy at Venice, then in Sweden where his Court had made him chargé d'affaires, and finally in Paris where he had been made the actual secretary to the embassy. He came quite unexpectedly, to surprise me at Montmorency. He had been decorated with a Spanish order, the name of which I forget, and wore a fine jewelled cross. He had been obliged, when proving his ancestry, to add a letter to his name and was now the Chevalier de Carrion. I found him quite unchanged, with the same kind heart and a mind that became more likeable every day. I should have resumed my old friendship with him if

Coidet had not got between us in his usual way, and taken advantage of my absence to worm himself into my place in the Chevalier's confidence where, under the pretence of being anxious to serve me, he in fact supplanted me.

The thought of Carrion reminds me of another of my country neighbours whom it would be very wrong of me not to mention, since I have to confess that I did him an unpardonable wrong. This was good M. Le Blond, who had done me a service at Venice and who, having come on a visit to France, had rented a country house at La Briche, not far from Montmorency.* As soon as I heard that he was my neighbour I went off to him in the joy of my heart, counting it more of a pleasure than a duty to pay him a visit. I set out the very next day, but met some people who were coming to see me, and had to return with them. Two days later I set out again; he had dined in Paris with all his family. The third time he was at home; I heard women's voices and saw a carriage at the door, at which I took fright. I wanted, at any rate on our first meeting, to see him without interruption and talk over our old days together. In short, I put off my visit from one day to another until shame at being so late in fulfilling this duty caused me not to fulfil it at all. After having had the courage to wait so long, I had not the courage to put in an appearance. This neglect, at which M. Le Blond could not help being justly offended, made my sluggishness towards him look like ingratitude. And yet I felt so little guilty in my heart that if I had been able to give him any real pleasure, even without his knowing it, I am sure that he would not have found me slow in doing so. But my indolence, my carelessness, and my delay in fulfilling small duties have done me more harm than any grave vices. My worst faults have been those of omission. I have rarely done anything I should not, but unfortunately I have still more rarely done what I should.

Since I am now on the subject of my Venice acquaintances, I must not forget one who belongs with them, and whom I did not lose till considerably after the rest. I am thinking of M. de Jonville, who had continued to treat me with great friendship after his return from Geneva. He was very fond of seeing me and liked to discuss the affairs and follies of M. de Montaigu, about whom he had heard a number of stories through the Foreign Office, where he had several connexions. I also had the pleasure of meeting again at his house my old

* When I wrote this I was full of my old blind confidence and far from suspecting the real motive and result of his visit to Paris.

colleague Dupont, who had bought a position in his own province and whom business sometimes brought to Paris. M. de Jonville became little by little so eager for my company that in the end it grew tiresome; and although we lived very far apart there was trouble between us if I let a whole week go by without dining with him. When he went to Jonville he always wanted to take me with him; but having once spent a week there, which had seemed a very long one to me, I was not anxious to go again. He was certainly an honourable and generous man, likeable indeed in some respects, but he was not very intelligent; he was handsome, slightly vain of his appearance and a good deal of a bore. He had a strange collection, perhaps unique of its kind, which greatly interested him, and in which he tried to interest his friends, who were sometimes less amused by it than he. This was a very complete file of all the topical sketches presented at Court and in Paris during the last fifty years, in which many anecdotes were to be found for which one would have looked in vain elsewhere. Now there is a source for the history of France, the like of which is almost unthinkable in any other country.

One day, when we were on the very best of terms, he received me so coldly, so frigidly, and in a manner so unlike his usual one that after giving him an opportunity of explaining himself, and even going so far as to ask him to, I left his house resolved never to set foot in it any more. This resolution I have kept. For I am never to be seen again in a place where I have once had a bad reception, and there was no Diderot there to plead on M. de Jonville's behalf. I searched my mind in vain for any wrong I could have done him. I could find none. I was certain that I had never spoken of him or of his family with any disrespect, for I was sincerely fond of him. And not only had I nothing but good to say of him, but my most constant maxim has always been never to speak with anything but respect of the houses I have frequented.

At last, after long pondering, I arrived at the following conjecture. The last time we had met he had given me supper at the rooms of some whores he knew, together with two or three Foreign Office clerks, very pleasant people who had neither looked nor behaved like rakes; and I can swear that, so far as I was concerned, I spent the evening meditating sadly enough on the unhappy fate of those poor creatures. I did not pay a share of the expenses, because M. de Jonville treated me to the supper, and I did not pay the girls anything because I had given them no opportunity of earning, in the *padoana* fashion, any money I might have offered them. We all departed in high

spirits and on the best of terms. I did not visit the girls again, but I went three or four days later to dine with M. de Jonville, whom I had not seen in the interval and who gave me the reception I have described. Being unable to imagine any reason other than some misunderstanding arising from that supper, and seeing that he did not wish to explain himself, I made my decision and gave up calling on him. But I continued to send him my books, and he often sent me his compliments, and one day when I met him in the foyer of the Comédie he politely reproached me for no longer coming to see him. But that did not bring me back. Thus this affair looked more like an attack of the sulks than a clean break. Nevertheless, since I had not seen him or heard of him since that day, it would have been too late to renew an acquaintance which had lapsed for several years. That is why M. de Jonville does not appear in my list, although I had for a long time been a frequent visitor at his house.

I will not swell this same list with the names of my many less intimate friends, or with those who, because of my absence, had ceased to be friends at all, and yet whom I still sometimes saw in the country, either at my own or at neighbours' houses; among them were the Abbé de Condillac, the Abbé de Mably, M. de Mairan, M. de Lalive, M. de Boisgelou, M. Watelet, M. Ancelet, and others whom it would be tedious to mention. I will make passing mention of M. de Margency, the King's Chamberlain, a former member of the Holbach clique, which he had left, like myself, and an old friend of Mme d'Épinay whom, like myself, he had given up. Nor must I forget his friend Desmahis, who won short-lived fame by his comedy *The Malapert*.^{*} The former was my country neighbour, his estate at Margency being near Montmorency. We were old acquaintances, but our proximity and certain experiences that we had in common brought us closer together. Desmahis died shortly afterwards. He had ability and wit; but he was rather like the eccentric in his own comedy, and somewhat fancied himself with the ladies, who did not greatly mourn his loss.

I cannot, however, refrain from mentioning a fresh correspondence into which I entered at that time, and which has had too much influence over the rest of my life for me not to record its beginnings. I am speaking of M. Lamoignon de Malesherbes,[†] First President of

^{*} *L'Impertinent*.

[[†] Chrétien-Guillaume de Lamoignon de Malesherbes (1721–94), Rousseau's chief protector, and a victim of the Revolution. He died on the scaffold.]

the Court of Excise, at that time responsible for the censorship of printed books, an office which he performed in an enlightened and temperate way, to the great satisfaction of men of letters. I had not paid a single call on him in Paris; I had, however, always received from him the greatest help and civility in censorship matters, and I knew that on more than one occasion he had severely shaken up those who attacked me in their writings. I had fresh evidence of his kindness over the printing of *Julie*; for the proof sheets of so large a book would have been very costly to send by post from Amsterdam. He, however, possessed free postal facilities, and allowed them to be addressed to him. He then sent them on to me, also free of charge, under the frank of his father, the Chancellor. When the work was printed he did not allow it to be sold in the Kingdom till an edition which he had had prepared for my benefit had been sold out. This he did against my will, for any such profit accruing to me would have been stolen from Rey, to whom I had sold my manuscript. So not only did I refuse to accept this present which was intended for me, without Rey's consent, – which he most generously gave – but I offered to share the hundred *pistoles*, to which it amounted, with him; to which he would not agree. For this hundred *pistoles* I had the annoyance, of which M. de Malesherbes had not warned me, of seeing my work horribly mutilated, and the sales of the good edition held up until the bad edition was exhausted.

I have always looked on M. de Malesherbes as a man of unassailable honesty, and nothing that has since befallen me has ever made me for a moment doubt his integrity. But he is as weak as he is honest, and sometimes harms those he takes an interest in by his efforts to protect them. Not only did he abridge the Paris edition by more than a hundred pages, but he made an excision in the copy of the good edition which he sent to Mme de Pompadour, which almost amounted to a breach of faith. Somewhere in the book I said that a coal-heaver's wife is worthy of more respect than a prince's mistress. This phrase had come to me in the heat of composition, and I swear that no personal allusion had been intended. When I read over the work I saw that such a meaning would be read into it. However, following the very rash principle that nothing should be removed on account of allusions that might be discovered by others, provided my conscience assured me that I had not meant them when I wrote, I decided not to remove that phrase, and contented myself with substituting the word *prince* for the word *king*, which I had originally written. This modification

did not seem sufficient to M. de Malesherbes. He cut out the whole phrase by means of a sheet which he had specially printed and stuck neatly into Mme de Pompadour's copy. She was not unaware of this piece of jugglery, for there were some kindly souls to inform her of it. But I did not hear of it till long afterwards, when I was beginning to feel the consequences.

Is this not also the origin of the secret, but implacable, hatred of another lady* who was in a similar situation, although I did not know of it, or even know her when I wrote the passage? When the book was published I had already met her, and I was much disturbed. I told the Chevalier de Lorenzi, who laughed at me and assured me that this lady was so little offended that she had not even noticed it. I believed him, rather too readily perhaps, and made myself easy though I had little reason to.

At the beginning of the winter I received a further mark of M. de Malesherbes's kindness, for which I was most grateful though I did not think it advisable to take advantage of it. There was a post vacant on the *Journal of Learning*† and he wrote to offer it to me, as if of his own initiative. But I easily understood from the phrasing of the letter (Packet C, No. 33) that he was acting on instructions and with authority; and he himself informed me in his next (Packet C, No. 47) that he had been commissioned to make me that offer. The duties of such a post were slight. It was merely a matter of two digests a month from books which would be brought to me, and I should never be obliged to go to Paris, not even to pay the director a visit of thanks. In that way I should be admitted to the society of some most distinguished men of letters, M. de Mairan, M. Clairaut, M. de Guignes, and the Abbé Barthélemy, the first two of whom I had already met, and the other two of whom I should be glad to. Moreover, for these very inexacting duties which I could easily perform, there was a salary of eight hundred francs going with the post. I thought the matter over for some hours before making up my mind, and I can affirm that this was only through fear of annoying Margency and displeasing M. de Malesherbes. But in the end the unbearable constraint of not being able to work when I pleased, of being held to time, and, still more, the certainty of failing in the duties which I should have had to undertake, prevailed, and decided me to refuse a post for which I was not suitable. I knew that my talent consisted entirely of a

[* The Countess de Boufflers, mistress of the Prince de Conti.]

† *Le Journal des Savants*.

certain enthusiasm for the matters I had to deal with, and that only love for greatness, truth, and beauty could awake my genius. What would the subjects of most of those books from which I should have had to make digests – or the books themselves – have mattered to me? My indifference to it all would have frozen my pen and dulled my wits. They imagined that I was a writer by trade, like all the other men of letters, whereas I was never able to write except from inspiration. That was certainly not what was required in the *Journal of Learning*. I wrote Margency a letter of thanks, therefore, couched in the politest terms, in which I set out the reasons for my refusal so clearly that neither he nor M de. Mealsherbes could possibly suppose touchiness or pride to play any part in it. Indeed they both approved of my decision, and treated me with no less friendship thereafter; and the secret was so well kept that the public never heard the least rumour of the matter.

This offer did not come at a favourable moment for me to accept it, since for some time I had been planning to abandon literature altogether, especially the profession of author. The event that had just occurred had absolutely disgusted me with men of letters, and I had learned from experience that it was impossible for me to live by the same profession without having some dealings with them. I was no less disillusioned with men of the world, and with the life of compromise I had just been leading, half on my own and half in company for which I was unfitted. I felt more than ever, from repeated experiences, that associations on unequal terms are always to the disadvantage of the weaker party. Since I consorted with wealthy people in a different walk of life from the one I had chosen, although I did not live on their scale, I was compelled to imitate them in many respects; and some small expenses, which were nothing to them, were to me both unavoidable and ruinous. Any other man who visits a country house is waited on by his valet, at table and in his room, and sends him to fetch whatever he wants. Having no direct dealings with the servants of the house and not even seeing them, he only gives them gratuities as and when he pleases. But I, being alone and without a valet, was at the mercy of the house servants and had necessarily to win their favour under pain of considerable inconvenience. Being treated then as their master's equal I had to treat the servants accordingly, and even better than anyone else would, since I stood in greater need of their services. This is not too bad when the servants are few, but in the houses that I visited there were many, all very sly, very grasping, and

very quick where their own interests were concerned; and the scoundrels knew how to manage things so that I should need them all, one after another. Paris ladies, with all their intelligence, have no idea of his state of things; and by trying to spare my purse, they succeeded in ruining me. If I supped in town some way from my lodgings, instead of allowing me to send for a coach the lady of the house would order the horses to be put to her own carriage and have me taken home. She was delighted to be sparing me twenty-four *sous* for a coach. But she did not think of the crown I gave to her footman and coachman. A lady might write to me from Paris to the Hermitage or to Montmorency; and to spare me the four *sous* which I should have had to pay for the postage, she sent it by one of her own servants, who arrived on foot bathed in sweat, and to whom I gave a dinner and a crown, which he had certainly earned. If she invited me to spend a week or a fortnight with her in the country she would say to herself: 'That will certainly be an economy for the poor fellow. For that time his food will not cost him anything.' She did not think that during that time I was not working also; that my housekeeping and rent, my washing and clothes were no less expensive, that I had to spend twice as much on my barber, and that it cost me rather more to live in her house than at home. Although I limited my small gratuities to the places where I stayed frequently they were nevertheless ruinous to me. I am quite certain that I paid out a good twenty-five crowns at Mme d'Houdetot's at Eaubonne, although I only slept there four or five times, and more than a hundred *pistoles* at Épinay and La Chevrette, during the five or six years when I was a most constant visitor. These expenses are unavoidable in a man of my temperament, who cannot do anything for himself, or improvise in any way, and cannot bear the sight of a grumbling valet who performs his duties grudgingly. Even at Mme Dupin's, where I was at home, and where I often did the servants favours, they never did me any except in return for my money. Subsequently I had entirely to discontinue these small gratuities which my finances no longer allowed me to pay; and then I was made a great deal more conscious of the drawbacks of visiting people who are not in one's own walk of life.

Yet if this existence had been to my taste I should have been consoled for these heavy expenses devoted to my pleasure. But to ruin myself in order to be bored was unendurable. And I was so conscious of the burden of this way of life that, taking advantage of the temporary liberty I then enjoyed, I decided to perpetuate it and absolutely

to renounce high society, the writing of books, and all dealings with literature, and to shut myself up for the rest of my days in the narrow and peaceful sphere for which I felt I was intended.

My profits from the *Letter to d'Alembert* and the *New Héloïse* had slightly restored my finances, which had become seriously depleted at the Hermitage. I found myself with about a thousand crowns in hand. *Émile*, to which I had settled down in earnest when I finished *Héloïse*, was well advanced, and I expected the profit from it at least to double that sum. I planned to invest this money to bring me in a small annual income which, together with my copying, would allow me to live without any more writing. I had still two works on the stocks. The first was my *Political Institutions*. I looked into the state of this book, and found that it still required several years' more labour on it. I had not the courage to continue with it, and to postpone my resolution until it was finished. Accordingly I abandoned it, deciding to extract from it whatever could be extracted and then to burn the rest; and pushing eagerly ahead with that task, without any interruption to *Émile*, in less than two years I put the finishing touches to the *Social Contract*.

There remained the *Dictionary of Music*. This was a purely mechanical work which could be done at any time and which had no other purpose than pecuniary profit. I reserved to myself the right to give it up or finish it at my leisure, according as my other resources all combined might render it necessary or superfluous. As for my *Morals of Sensibility*, which remained in the form of an outline, I abandoned it altogether.

As my ultimate plan, if I could entirely dispense with copying, was to go far away from Paris, where the constant stream of visitors made living costly and robbed me of the time I should have spent in providing for it, in order to guard myself in my retirement against the boredom that is said to overtake authors when they lay down the pen, I kept an occupation in reserve which would fill up the void in my solitary life, yet not tempt me to publish anything more so long as I lived. I do not know what whim had prompted him, but Rey had been urging me for some time now to write my memoirs. Although up to that point my life had not been particularly interesting so far as incidents were concerned, I felt that with the frank treatment I was capable of giving it it might become so. For I decided to make it a work unique and unparalleled in its truthfulness, so that for once at least the world might behold a man as he was within. I had always

been amused at Montaigne's false ingenuousness, and at his pretence of confessing his faults while taking good care only to admit to likeable ones; whereas I, who believe, and always have believed, that I am on the whole the best of men, felt that there is no human heart, however pure, that does not conceal some odious vice. I knew that I was represented in the world under features so unlike my own and at times so distorted, that notwithstanding my faults, none of which I intended to pass over, I could not help gaining by showing myself as I was. Besides, this could not be done without also showing other people as they were, and consequently the work could only appear after my death and that of many others; which further emboldened me to write my *Confessions*, for which I should never have to blush before anyone. I resolved therefore to devote my leisure to the execution of this undertaking, and I set about collecting the letters and papers which might guide or assist my memory, with deep regrets for all that I had already torn up, burnt or lost.

This plan for absolute retirement, one of the most sensible I have ever made, took a firm hold on my mind; and I was already beginning to carry it out when Heaven, which had a different fate in store for me, threw me into a fresh whirlpool.

Montmorency, the ancient and magnificent patrimony of the family of that name, has been confiscated and belongs to them no longer, having passed through the sister of Duke Henri to the house of Condé, which has changed the name of Montmorency to Enghien. So the Duchy contains no castle other than an old tower where the archives are kept and where the tenants come to do their homage. But there is, at Montmorency or Enghien, a private house, built by 'poor' Croisat, as he was nicknamed, which is as grand as the finest of castles and is deservedly so called. The imposing appearance of this superb structure, the terrace on which it is built, its view which is perhaps unique in all the world, its vast reception room painted by a distinguished hand, its gardens laid out by the famous Le Nôtre – all these form a whole, the striking majesty of which has nevertheless a certain simplicity about it which enforces a lasting admiration. The Duke of Luxembourg, the Marshal,* who then occupied the house, came twice every year into this district where his ancestors had once been masters, to spend five or six weeks as an ordinary resident, but with a splendour which was in no way inferior to the former splendour

[* Charles-François-Frédéric de Montmorency, Marshal and Duke de Luxembourg (1702–64).]

of his house. On his first visit after I had settled at Montmorency, the Marshal and his wife sent a servant to convey me their compliments and to invite me to take supper with them whenever I wished. Each time they returned they never failed to send me the same compliments and the same invitation. It reminded me of Mme de Beuzenval, when she sent me to dine in the servants' hall. Times were changed, but I was still the same man. I did not want to be sent to dine with the servants, and I did not much care about the tables of the great. I should have preferred them to leave me as I was, and neither make a fuss of me nor humiliate me. I replied to M. and Mme de Luxembourg's civilities in a decent and respectful way, but I did not accept their invitation. My ill-health, as well as my natural shyness and my awkwardness in speaking, made me tremble at the very idea of appearing at an assembly of people of the Court, and I did not even go to the house to make a visit of thanks, although I knew well enough that this was what they wanted, and that all their attentions were due rather to curiosity than goodwill.

However, their overtures continued, and even grew more frequent. When the Countess de Boufflers, who was then very intimate with Mme de Luxembourg, came to Montmorency she sent to inquire after me and asked if she might come to see me. I sent the conventional reply, but I did not stir. On their Easter visit in the following year (1759) the Chevalier de Lorenzi, who was at the court of Prince de Conti and a member of Mme de Luxembourg's circle, came to see me several times. We became acquainted, and he urged me to go to the castle. I did nothing. At last one afternoon and quite unexpectedly, I saw the Marshal de Luxembourg approaching, attended by five or six persons. There was now no way of escape. I could not, without being considered arrogant and ill-bred, avoid returning his visit, and paying my respects to Mme de Luxembourg, in whose name he had overwhelmed me with complimentary messages. Thus began, under the most unhappy auspices, a connexion which I could no longer ward off, but which a well-founded presentiment made me fear up to the moment when I was committed to it.

I was extremely afraid of Mme de Luxembourg. I knew that she was pleasant. I had seen her several times at the theatre and at Mme Dupin's, ten or twelve years before, when she was Duchess de Boufflers and still possessed her early and radiant beauty. But she was said to be spiteful, and that reputation, in so great a lady, made me tremble. The moment I saw her I was her slave. I found her charming

with that charm that is proof against time, and is so very prone to act upon my heart. I expected to find her conversation sarcastic and full of epigrams. It was not so, it was much better than that. Mme de Luxembourg's conversation does not sparkle with wit; it does not consist of sallies, and it is not even really clever; but it is exquisitely delicate. It is never striking but it always pleases. Her compliments are the more intoxicating for their very simplicity; they seem to fall from her lips without her thinking of them; it is as if her heart were overflowing, only because it is too full. I seemed to detect on my first visit that, despite my awkward manner and clumsy phrases, I was not displeasing to her. All society ladies know how to give you that impression when they wish, whether it is justified or not. But not all of them know, as Mme de Luxembourg did, how to produce that impression in so charming a manner that it no longer occurs to one to doubt its genuineness. From the first day my belief in her would have been as complete as shortly afterwards it became, if her daughter-in-law, the Duchess of Montmorency, a silly and somewhat spiteful young woman – and I think also a rather quarrelsome one – had not taken it into her head to make a set at me, so that what with her mamma's copious compliments and her own coquetries I was not too certain that they were not laughing at me.

I should perhaps have found it difficult to relieve myself of my fears in regard to the two ladies, had not the Marshal's extreme kindness convinced me that their attentions were genuine. Nothing could be more surprising, considering my timorous disposition, than the readiness with which I accepted the terms of equality on which he wished me to treat him, except perhaps the readiness with which he accepted the complete independence in which I wished to be left. Believing that I was right to be content with my condition and not desirous of changing it, neither he nor Mme de Luxembourg appeared to concern themselves for a moment about my purse or my fortune. Although I could not doubt the affectionate interest which they both took in me, they never proposed to find me a post or offered me their backing except on a single occasion, when Mme de Luxembourg appeared to wish me to enter the French Academy. I excused myself on the grounds of my religion. But she told me that this was no obstacle, or not one beyond her powers to remove. I replied that in spite of the honour I should feel at being a member of so illustrious a body, having refused the invitation of M. de Tressan and, in a sense, of the King of Poland, to join the Nancy Academy I could not decently

join any other. Mme de Luxembourg did not insist, and there was no further talk of the matter. The simplicity of my dealings with these great people, who could do anything for me, M. de Luxembourg being, deservedly, the King's particular friend, forms a singular contrast to the perpetual botheration and interference which I had suffered from those friends and patrons whom I had just abandoned, and whose object had been rather to humiliate me than to be of service.

When the Marshal had visited me at Mont-Louis, I had received him and his suite in my single living-room with some embarrassment, not on account of being obliged to offer them seats amongst my dirty plates and broken pots, but because my rotten floor was falling to pieces and I was afraid that the weight of them all would completely bring it down. Less concerned with my own danger than with the risk to which that kind gentleman's condescension exposed him, I hastened to save him from it and lead him, cold though it still was, to my turret, which was fireless and open to the sky. Once he was there I told him my reasons for having brought him out. These he repeated to Mme de Luxembourg, and they both pressed me to accept accommodation in the Château until my floor should be repaired or, if I preferred it, in an isolated building in the middle of the park, which was called the Little Château. This enchanting abode deserves some special description.

The park or garden of Montmorency is not level, like that of La Chevrette. It is rugged and uneven and full of eminences and depressions, of which the skilled landscape gardener has made good use as a contrast to his groves and ornamental features, his ponds and vistas; in that way extending, one might say, by the use of art and genius, a space somewhat constricted in itself. This park rises at one end to the terrace and Château which overlook it, and falls at the other into a gorge which opens out broadly towards the valley, the re-entrant angle being filled by a large sheet of water. Between the orangery, which lies at the point where the gorge broadens, and this sheet of water, enclosed by hills planted with groves and trees, stands the Little Château I have mentioned. The building, with the surrounding land, had once been the property of the famous de Brun, who had taken delight in building and decorating it according to that taste in architecture and ornament which that great painter had absorbed with his mother's milk. This Château has been rebuilt since his time, but still according to its original owner's plan. It is small and

simple, but elegant. As it is in a hollow, between the orangery pond and that large sheet of water, and therefore liable to be damp, it has been pierced by a central court surrounded by rows of columns, through which the air can blow into the whole building and so keep it dry despite its situation. Viewed from the opposite hill, which forms the prospect from its windows, it appears to be completely surrounded by water, and looks like some enchanted island, or the prettiest of the three in the Borromean group in Lake Maggiore, Isola Bella.

I was offered the choice of any one of the four complete apartments which this building contains, in addition to a ground floor, which is given up to a ballroom, a billiard room, and a kitchen. I chose the smallest and simplest, above the kitchen, of which I also had the use. It was neat and charming, and furnished in blue and white. And there in that deep and delightful solitude, amongst the woods and the waters, to the sound of birds of every kind, and amidst the perfume of orange blossom, in a continuous ecstasy I composed the fifth book of *Émile*, the fresh colouring of which I to a large extent owed to the sharp impact of the locality in which I wrote it.

How eagerly I ran every morning at sunrise to breathe in the balmy air in the colonnade! What good creamy coffee I took there alone with my Thérèse! My cat and dog kept us company. Such a retinue would have sufficed me for the rest of my life. I should never have felt a moment's boredom. There I was in an earthly paradise. I lived in paradisaal innocence and tasted something of the pleasures that go with it.

On their July visit M. and Mme de Luxembourg paid me such attentions and plied me with such favours that, since I was their guest and overwhelmed by their kindnesses, I could not do less than respond by visiting them assiduously. I dined with them; I went for a walk with the Marshal in the afternoons; but I did not take supper with them, because of the grand company, and because they supped too late for me. Up to this point everything was in order, and there would have been no trouble if I had known how to stop there. But I have never been capable of moderation in my relationships, or of simply fulfilling the duties of society. It has always been all or nothing with me. Soon it was all; and finding myself made much of and spoiled by people of their importance, I overstepped the limits and conceived a friendship for them, of a kind only permissible between equals. I expressed it by complete familiarity of manners, while they con-

tinued to treat me with the courtesy and politeness to which I had grown accustomed. I was never, however, very comfortable with Mme de Luxembourg. Although I was not absolutely reassured as to her character, I feared it less than her tongue. For it was principally her wit of which I was in awe. I knew that she was exacting in conversation and had a right to be. I knew that women, and particularly great ladies, absolutely require to be kept amused, and that it is better to offend them than to bore them; and I judged from her comments on the conversation of her guests after their departure what she must have thought of my nonsense. An expedient occurred to me for saving myself the embarrassment of talking to her; and that was to read aloud. She had heard about *Julie*, and knew that it was at the printer's. She showed some eagerness to see the work. I offered to read it to her, and she accepted my offer. Every morning I went to her room at ten o'clock, M. de Luxembourg came in, and the door was shut. I read beside her bed, and I managed my readings so well that they would have lasted for the whole visit, even if it had not been cut short.* The success of this stratagem exceeded my expectations. Mme de Luxembourg was crazy about *Julie* and its author. She talked of nothing but me, showed no other interest, paid me compliments all day long and embraced me ten times a day. She insisted that I should always sit beside her at table; and when some nobleman wanted to take the seat, she always said that it was mine and made him sit elsewhere. It can be imagined what impression such charming treatment made upon me, who am enslaved by the least mark of affection. I grew genuinely attached to her in proportion to the attachment she showed me. My only fear on seeing her infatuation and feeling myself too devoid of wit and charm to sustain it, was that it might turn to revulsion; and unfortunately for me this fear was only too well founded.

There must have been a natural antipathy between her mind and mine because, besides the innumerable stupidities which escaped me every moment in conversation, even in my letters and when I was on the best footing with her, there were other things which displeased her, I could not imagine why. I will give only one example, though I could give a hundred. She knew that I was making a copy of *Héloïse* for Mme d'Houdetot at so much a page. She wanted one for herself on the same terms. I promised her one and, enrolling her,

* The loss of an important battle, which greatly upset the King, compelled M. de Luxembourg to return hurriedly to Court.

therefore, among my customers, I wrote her a letter of polite thanks on the subject; at least such was my intention. Here is her reply, which brought me down out of the clouds (Packet C, No. 43):

Versailles, Tuesday

I am delighted and most satisfied; your letter has given me infinite pleasure. I hasten to tell you so, and to thank you for it.

Here are the exact words which you wrote: '*Although you are certainly a very good customer, I find it difficult to take your money. Really it is I who should be paying you for the pleasure of working for you.*' I will say no more on the subject. I am sorry that you never tell me of the state of your health. Nothing is of greater interest to me. I love you with all my heart; and it grieves me, I assure you, to tell you so on paper, for I should very much like to tell you so by word of mouth. M. de Luxembourg loves you also and embraces you with all his heart.

When I received this letter I hurriedly replied to it without examining it more fully, in order to protest against any awkward misinterpretations; and after spending several days on a closer examination with a feeling of uneasiness which can well be imagined, and still without being able to understand it, I wrote my final answer on the subject as follows:

Montmorency, 8 December 1759

Since my last letter I have examined the passage in question hundreds and hundreds of times. I have considered it in its own natural meaning, and have considered every interpretation that can be put on it; and I assure you, Madame, that I do not yet know whether I owe you an apology or you owe me one.

It is now ten years since those letters were written. I have often thought of them since then; and so obtuse am I on this point to this very day that I have never succeeded in understanding what she could have found in that passage, I will not say offensive, but even to displease her.

While on the subject of this manuscript copy of *Héloïse* which Mme de Luxembourg asked me for, I should mention the way in which I had intended to make it superior to all others. I had written the adventures of Lord Edward separately and had for a long time been undecided whether to include them, complete or in part, in this book, where they seemed to me out of place. I decided in the end to omit them entirely, since they were out of keeping with the tone of

the rest, and would have spoiled the book's touching simplicity. I had another much stronger reason when I made Mme de Luxembourg's acquaintance. There was a Roman marchioness in the story, an odious character, some of whose features, although not applicable to the Marshal's wife, might have been applied to her by people who only knew her by reputation. I more than congratulated myself therefore on my decision, and decided to adhere to it. But in my burning desire to embellish her copy with something that was not in any other I foolishly thought of these wretched adventures, and made up my mind to take a selection from them and append it to the work. A crazy plan, the extravagance of which can only be explained by the blind fatality which was dragging me to my destruction.

*Quos vult perdere Jupiter, dementat.**

I was stupid enough to make this extract with great care and much labour, and to send it to her as if it were the loveliest thing in the world, informing her at the same time that I had burned the original, that the selection was for her eyes alone and would never be seen by anyone else unless she showed it herself. But this, far from acting as a proof of my prudence and discretion, as I had supposed it would, only conveyed to her my own view of the applicability of those features in my Roman marchioness which might have offended her. Such was my imbecility that I had no doubt of her being delighted by what I had done. She did not pay me the great compliments on it that I had expected nor, to my great surprise, did she ever speak to me of the manuscript I had sent her. Being myself still charmed by my conduct of the matter, it was not till long afterwards that I suspected, from other indications, the effect that it had produced.

I had another, more sensible idea for improving her manuscript, which in its remoter results was hardly less harmful to me; for everything assists the work of destiny when it summons a man to his doom. It occurred to me to ornament the manuscript with the drawings for the engravings of *Julie*, which were of the same size as the manuscript paper. I asked Coindet for them, since I had every claim to them, particularly because I had let him take the profit of the plates, which had a great sale. But he is as cunning as I am the reverse. My frequent requests for them gave him some idea of my intentions regarding them. So on the excuse that he would like to add a few

* Whom Jupiter wishes to ruin he first makes mad.

embellishments, he got me to leave them with him, and finally presented them himself

*Ego versiculos feci: alter tulit honores.**

This acted as his introduction to the Hôtel de Luxembourg, and gave him a certain standing there. After I had moved to the Little Château he often came to see me there, and always in the mornings, particularly when M. and Mme de Luxembourg were at Montmorency. The consequence was that I spent the day with him, and did not get to the Château at all. When scolded for staying away, I explained my reason. They urged me to bring M. Coindet, and I did so. That was what the sly fellow had been after. So, thanks to their excessive kindness to me, a clerk of M. Thélusson's, whom his master sometimes invited to dinner when there were no guests, suddenly found himself welcomed at the table of a Marshal of France with princes, duchesses, and the greatest figures at Court. I shall never forget how one day, when he was compelled to return to Paris early, the Marshal said to his guests after dinner: 'Let us take a walk along the road to Saint-Denis, and we can accompany M. Coindet.' The poor fellow could not stand up to it; he lost his head completely. For my part, I was so affected that I could not say a word. I followed behind, weeping like a child, and longing to kiss the good old marshal's footprints. But this sequel to the story of my manuscript copy has made me anticipate events. Let us take them in their proper order, in so far as my memory will permit.

As soon as the little house at Mont-Louis was ready, I had it neatly and simply furnished, and returned there to live. For I could not break the resolution I had made on leaving the Hermitage, always to have a place of my own. But neither I could make up my mind to give up my apartment in the Little Château. I kept the key and, being so fond of those little breakfasts in the colonnade, I often slept there, and sometimes spent two or three days there, as if it were my country house. I had then perhaps the best and most comfortable apartments of any private individual in Europe. My landlord, M. Mathas, who was the best fellow in the world, had left the direction of the repairs at Mont-Louis to me, allowing me to direct his workmen without any interference from him. I found means of making a complete apartment, consisting of a bedroom, an ante-chamber, and a closet, out of a single room. On the ground floor were Thérèse's room and the

* I made the verses; another man takes the credit.

kitchen. The turret served me as a study, after a good glazed partition and a fireplace had been put in. I amused myself when I was there by improving the terrace, which was already shaded by two rows of young limes. I planted another two rows to make an arbour. I had a table put there and stone benches, and I planted lilac, syringa, and honeysuckle all around. I had a fine flower border made parallel to the two rows of trees, and this terrace – which was higher than the Château terrace, and had quite as fine a view – was visited by swarms of birds which I had tamed, and served me as a reception room in which to receive M. and Mme de Luxembourg, the Duke de Villeroy, the Prince de Tingry, the Marquis d'Armentières, the Duchess de Montmorency, the Duchess de Boufflers, the Countess de Valentinois, the Countess de Boufflers, and other people of that condition, who condescended to face a very tiring climb in making the pilgrimage to Mont-Louis. I owed all these visits to the kindness of M. and Mme de Luxembourg; I was grateful to them, and my heart rendered them homage for it. It was in one of these transports of emotion that I once said as I embraced M. de Luxembourg: 'Ah, Marshal, before I knew you I used to hate the great, and I hate them still more now that you have shown me how easy it would be for them to make themselves adored.'

What is more, I categorically demand of all those who knew me during that period whether they ever noticed me to be even momentarily dazzled by the brilliance or saw the fumes of that incense rise to my head; whether they found me less consistent in my behaviour, less simple in my manners, less familiar and affable towards the people, less familiar with my neighbours, less prompt to do everyone a service when I could, without ever jibbing at the numberless and often unreasonable importunities to which I was continuously subjected. If my heart drew me to the castle of Montmorency out of sincere affection for its master and mistress, it took me also among my neighbours to enjoy the mild pleasures of that equable and simple life, without which there is no happiness for me. Thérèse had made friends with the daughter of a mason named Pilleu, who was my neighbour; I became friendly with Pilleu himself; and after having dined at the castle in the morning, not without some reluctance and in order to please Mme de Luxembourg, how eagerly would I hurry back in the evening to take supper with the good fellow and his family, sometimes at his house, and sometimes at mine!

In addition to these two lodgings I had soon a third, at the Hôtel de

Luxembourg, whose owners urged me so forcefully to visit them there sometimes that I consented, despite my dislike for Paris, where I had not been since I moved to the Hermitage except on the two occasions I have mentioned. Even now I only went on the days fixed beforehand, merely to sup there and return next morning. I entered and left through the garden which adjoins the boulevard; so that I could say with perfect truth that I had never set foot on the pavement of Paris.

In the midst of this temporary prosperity a catastrophe was preparing afar off which was to signalize its end. A short while after my return to Mont-Louis, unwillingly as usual, I made a new acquaintance which marks another period in my history: whether for good or for ill will be seen hereafter. This was the Marchioness de Verdelin, my neighbour, whose husband had just bought a country house at Soisy, near Montmorency. Mlle d'Ars, the daughter of Count d'Ars – a man of rank although poor – had married M. de Verdelin, who was old and ugly, deaf, harsh, brutal, and jealous, scarred and blind in one eye, but in other respects a good enough fellow when one knew how to deal with him, and with an income of fifteen to twenty thousand *livres*, to which her parents married her. This charming fellow, who swore and shouted, grumbled and stormed, and made his wife cry all day long, always ended by doing as she wanted, and doing it to spite her, since she knew how to persuade him that it was he who wanted it and she who did not. M. de Margency, whom I have already mentioned, was Madame's friend and became her husband's. Some years before, he had let them his castle at Margency, near Eaubonne and Andilly; and that had been at precisely the time of my passion for Mme d'Houdetot. Mme d'Houdetot and Mme de Verdelin became acquainted through Mme d'Aubeterre, their mutual friend; and the Margency gardens being on the road which Mme d'Houdetot took to Mount Olympus, her favourite walk, Mme Verdelin gave her a key, so that she could go through. Thanks to that key, I often went through with her. But I disliked unexpected encounters, and when Mme de Verdelin chanced to meet us on our way I did not greet her but left them together, and walked on ahead. This ungallant behaviour could not have given her a very good opinion of me. Nevertheless when she was at Soisy she always sought my company. She came to see me several times at Mont-Louis, but did not find me at home; and, seeing that I did not return her visits, she took it into her head to send me pots of flowers for my terrace, in order to force me to do so.

I simply had to go and thank her, and that was sufficient. We were then acquainted.

Our relationship began by being stormy, like all those that I have made against my will. There was never any real peace about it. Mme de Verdelin's cast of mind was too antipathetic to my own. Spiteful remarks and witticisms rise so simply to her lips that one needs to be perpetually on the watch – a very tiring thing for me – to see when one is being laughed at. One silly incident which I remember will serve as an example of her manner. Her brother had just been given command of a frigate cruising against the English. I spoke of their method of arming this frigate without prejudice to its speed. 'Yes,' she said without changing her tone, 'they only take as many cannon as they need to fight.' I have seldom heard her speak well of any of her absent friends without slipping in some damaging word. What she did not construe in some bad sense she turned to ridicule, and her friend Margency was not exempt from this treatment. What I also found quite unbearable about her was the continual nuisance of her little messages, her little presents, and her little notes, which I had to rack my brains to answer, and which were always a source of fresh embarrassment whether it was a question of thanks or of a refusal. However, from continually seeing her, in the end I became fond of her. She had her troubles, as I had. Mutual confidences made our meetings interesting. Nothing draws two hearts together so much as the pleasure of weeping together. We sought one another's company in order to console one another; and this need has often made me overlook a great deal. I had mingled so much harshness with my frankness towards her and had sometimes shown so little admiration for her character that I really must have felt a good deal of respect for her to believe that she could sincerely forgive me. Here is a sample of the letters which I sometimes wrote to her. It is noteworthy that she never seemed in any way offended in any of her replies.

Montmorency, 5 November 1760

You tell me, Madame, that you did not explain yourself well in order to convey to me that I explained myself badly. You speak of your alleged stupidity in order to make me conscious of mine. You boast of being no more than a commonplace woman, as if you were afraid of being taken at your word; and your apologies to me are a means of informing me that I owe some to you in return. Yes, Madame, I know that very well; it is I am who stupid and commonplace, and even worse, if that is possible. It is I who choose my words too badly to please

fine French lady who pays such attention to words and speaks as well as you do. But consider that I take them in their common linguistic sense, and neither know nor care about the genteel meanings attached to them in the virtuous society of Paris. If my expressions are sometimes ambiguous, I try to make their sense clear by my behaviour etc.

The rest of the letter is more or less similar in tone. Her answer (Packet D, No. 41) will give some idea of the incredible forbearance of a woman who harboured no more resentment for such a letter than she evinced in her reply, or in her subsequent behaviour towards me. The enterprising Coindet, whose boldness verged on effrontery, and who kept a watch on all my friends, was not long in using my name in order to introduce himself at Mme de Verdelin's; and soon, unknown to me, he became more intimate there than I was myself. He was a strange creature, was Coindet. He introduced himself as a friend of mine to all my acquaintances, made himself at home and took his meals with them without ceremony. In his devotion to my interests he always spoke of me with tears in his eyes. But when he came to see me he kept absolutely quiet about all these connexions, and about everything else that he knew was sure to interest me. Instead of telling me about anything he had heard or said or seen that affected me, he let me talk and even asked me questions. He never knew anything about Paris except what I told him. In fact, although everyone spoke about him to me, he never spoke to me about anyone. He was secretive and mysterious only with his friend. But let us leave Coindet and Mme de Verdelin for the present. We shall come back to them later.

Some time after my return to Mont-Louis, Latour the painter came to see me, and brought me my portrait in pastels which he had shown at the Salon some years before. He had wanted to give it to me, then, but I had refused it. Mme d'Épinay, however, who had given me hers and wanted mine, had made me promise to ask him for it back. He had taken some time to retouch it, and in the meanwhile had come to my break with Mme d'Épinay. I gave her back her portrait and, there being no longer any question of giving her mine, I hung it in my room in the Little Château. M. de Luxembourg saw it there, and liked it. I offered it to him, he accepted it and I sent it to him. He and Madame understood that I should be glad to have theirs, so they had miniatures painted by a very fine artist, and set in a sweetmeat box of rock-crystal mounted in gold. This present they made me in a most delicate way, which highly delighted me. Mme de Luxembourg would not consent to let her portrait occupy the top of the box. She

had several times scolded me for preferring M. de Luxembourg to herself. I had never rebutted the charge, because it was true; and by her manner of placing her portrait she showed me most delicately, but quite clearly, that she had not forgotten my preference.

At about this time I did something very foolish which did not help to keep me in her good graces. Although I was quite unacquainted with M. de Silhouette,* and had no reason to like him, I had a high opinion of his administrative efficiency. When he began to make his weight felt by the financiers, I saw that he was beginning this operation at an unfavourable time. But I was no less ardent in my hopes for his success, and when I heard that he had been superseded I wrote to him, in my foolishness, the following letter that I will not attempt to justify:

Montmorency, 2 December 1759

Deign, sir, to accept the homage of a solitary man who is unknown to you, but who esteems you for your talents, respects you for your administrative achievements, and who has done you the honour of supposing that you would not hold your office for long. Being unable to save the State except at the expense of the Capital, which has destroyed it, you have braved the protests of the money-grabbers. When I saw you crush the wretches I envied you your position; and now that I see you leave it without retracting, I admire you. You may be satisfied with yourself, sir. You depart with an honourable reputation, which you will enjoy for many years without a rival. The curses of rogues are the just man's glory.

1760 Mme de Luxembourg, who knew that I had written this letter, spoke to me about it on her Easter visit. I showed it to her. She asked for a copy and I gave her one. But I did not know when I gave it to her that she was herself one of the money-grabbers who had got rid of Silhouette, and that she was interested in the under-farming of taxes. With all my stupidities I might have been accused of deliberately exciting the hatred of a pleasant and powerful woman, of whom I was, actually, becoming fonder every day, and whose displeasure I was far from wishing to incur, although by my clumsiness I was doing all that was needed to that end. It is hardly necessary to mention, I think, that it was to her I made the remark on the subject of M. Tronchin's opiate which I recorded in the first part

* Étienne de Silhouette (1709-67), Controller general of Finance.

of these *Confessions*; the other lady present was Mme de Mirepoix. They never spoke to me of it again, nor did either of them show the least indication of having remembered it. But I find it difficult to suppose, even ignoring all thought of subsequent events, that Mme de Luxembourg can really have forgotten it. For my part, I tried to deceive myself about the effect of my stupidities by proving to myself that I had committed none of them deliberately in order to offend her. As if any woman could forgive such things, even if she were perfectly certain that they were not in the least intentional.

However, although she seemed to notice nothing and to feel nothing, and I could see no waning in her attentions, nor change in her behaviour, the persistence and continuous growth of an only too well founded presentiment made me incessantly fear that her infatuation for me might soon be succeeded by a revulsion. Could I expect from so great a lady a constancy proof against my lack of skill in fostering it? I could not even conceal from her the dumb presentiment which afflicted me and made me even more morose than usual. The answer can be judged from the following letter, which contains a most singular prediction.

N.B. This letter, which bears no date in my rough copy, was written in October 1760, at the latest.

How cruel your kindnesses are! Why must you disturb the peace of a hermit who was renouncing the pleasures of life in order no longer to feel its weariness? I have spent my days in a vain search for lasting attachments, and have been unable to form any in a social class within my reach. Should I then look for them in yours? Neither ambition nor interest tempt me. I am rather vain and somewhat fearful. I can resist anything except affection. Why do you both attack me through a weakness which I must conquer, since we are too far apart for our hearts to be united by a mutual flow of tenderness? Will gratitude suffice for a heart which knows no two ways of bestowing itself, and does not feel itself capable of mere friendship. Friendship, Madame! Ah, there lies my misfortune! It is good of you and the Marshal to use such a term, but I am a fool to take you at your word. You are amusing yourselves, I am becoming attached to you, and there will be fresh sorrows for me at the end of the game. How I hate all your titles, and pity you for bearing them! You seem so well-fitted to enjoy the charms of private life! If only you lived at Clarens! I would go there to find my life's happiness, but the Château of Montmorency, the Hôtel de Luxembourg! Is it there that Jean-Jacques should be seen? Is that where a friend of equality should bring the affections of a tender heart which, when it repays the esteem that is shown it, believes it is returning as much as it

receives? You are good and sensitive too; I know it, I have seen it, and I am sorry that I was not able to believe it sooner. But in your station in life, in your way of living, nothing can make a lasting impression; so many new objects obliterate one another, and so completely, that not one remains. You will forget me, Madame, once you have made it impossible for me to forget you. You will have done a great deal to make me unhappy, and yourself unpardonable.

I joined M. de Luxembourg's name with hers in order to take the edge off the compliment for her. Besides, I felt so sure of him that I had never even experienced the least anxiety about the durability of his friendship. None of my fears of Madame extended to him. I have never felt the least mistrust of his nature. I knew that he was weak, but trustworthy. I was afraid of no cooling on his part, nor did I expect from him any heroic attachment. The simplicity and familiarity of our manner with one another showed the extent of our mutual dependence, which was in both our cases justified. I shall honour and cherish the memory of that worthy gentleman so long as I live; and whatever may have been done to alienate him from me I am as certain that he died my friend as if I had received his last sigh.

On their second visit to Montmorency, in 1760, having come to the end of *Julie* I went on to *Émile* as a means of keeping in with Mme de Luxembourg. But that was not so successful, perhaps because the subject was less to her taste, perhaps because she finally got tired of so much reading. Nevertheless she asked me to entrust the printing of it to her, for she was always reproaching me for letting my publishers trick me, and promised to make me a better bargain. I agreed, on the express condition that the book should not be printed in France, and on this point we had a long dispute. I maintained that it was impossible to obtain tacit permission, and imprudent even to ask for it, and objected to its being printed in the Kingdom under any other conditions, while she maintained that there would not be the slightest difficulty with the censorship under the system adopted by the Government. She found means of getting M. de Malesherbes to subscribe to her opinion, and he wrote me a long letter on the subject with his own hand to convince me that the 'Profession of a Savoyard Vicar' was absolutely certain to win universal approval, and would even, under the circumstances, be appreciated at Court. I was surprised to find this official, who was generally so nervous, so accommodating on this subject. As his approval automatically legalized the publication of a book, I made no further objection. However, a

strange scruple made me continue to insist that the book should be printed in Holland, and by Néaulme, whom I not only named but advised of my intention. I agreed, for the rest, that the profits of publication should go to a French bookseller, and that when it was ready it should be offered for sale in Paris or anywhere else, since the sales did not concern me. These were the exact terms of my arrangement with Mme de Luxembourg, on the conclusion of which I handed her my manuscript.

She had brought her granddaughter Mlle de Boufflers, now the Duchess de Lauzun, on this visit. Her name was Amélie, and she was a charming person. Her looks, her sweetness, and her shyness were alike truly original, and nothing could have been tenderer or more chaste than the feelings she inspired. Moreover, she was a child of under eleven. Mme de Luxembourg, finding her too shy, endeavoured to stimulate her. She allowed me several times to give her a kiss, which I did with my usual awkwardness. Instead of paying her the compliments another would have done in my place, I stood there tongue-tied and confused, and I do not know which of us was the more bashful, the poor child or myself. One day I met her alone on the stairs of the Little Château, where she had just been to see Thérèse, with whom her governess was still talking. Not knowing what to say to her, I asked her for a kiss which, in the innocence of her heart, she did not refuse me, as she had already given me one that very morning at her grandmother's orders and in her presence. Next day, reading *Émile* at Mme de Luxembourg's bedside, I came upon a passage in which I rightly censure my action of the day before. She found the observation very proper, and made some sensible comment upon it, which brought a blush to my cheeks. What a curse my incredible foolishness has been to me, making me so often appear vile and guilty when I am no more than foolish and embarrassed. For this foolishness is only taken for a dishonest excuse in a man known to be not without intelligence. I can swear that in that reprehensible kiss, as in all the rest, my heart and senses were every whit as pure as Mlle Amélie's, and that if at that moment I could have avoided meeting her I should have done so; not that it did not give me great pleasure to see her, but because of the difficulty of finding something agreeable to say to her in passing. How can it be that a very child can perturb a man who is not frightened by the power of kings? What should I do and how behave, when so utterly destitute of presence of mind? If I compel myself to speak to the people I meet, I infallibly commit a blunder. If I

say nothing, I am a man-hater, a wild animal, a bear. Total imbecility would have been much less prejudicial to me. But the worldly talents I have lacked have made my private ones the instruments of my undoing.

At the conclusion of this same visit Mme de Luxembourg performed a kind act in which I had some share. Diderot had most carelessly offended the Princess de Robeck, M. de Luxembourg's daughter; and Palissot, whose patron she was, avenged her by his comedy, *The Philosophers*,* in which I was held up to ridicule and Diderot cruelly mishandled. The author was more sparing of me, less I think because of any obligation he felt towards me than through fear of displeasing his patron's father, whom he knew to be fond of me. Duchesne the bookseller, who was unknown to me at the time, sent me the play as soon as it was printed; and I think he did so at Palissot's request. For perhaps the playwright thought that I should enjoy seeing a man I had broken with torn to pieces. He was greatly mistaken. Though I broke with Diderot, I considered him not so much wicked as weak and foolish, and have always preserved an affection, even an esteem, for him in my heart, as well as a respect for our former friendship, which I know was for a long time as genuine on his side as on mine. It is quite a different matter with Grimm, a man false by nature, who never loved me and is not even capable of love, and who light-heartedly, without any grievance and merely to satisfy his own dark jealousy, secretly became my cruellest calumniator. He is absolutely nothing to me now, but Diderot will always be my former friend. My heart was moved at the sight of this hateful play. I could not bear to read it and sent it back to Duchesne without finishing it, together with the following letter:

Montmorency, 21 May 1760

On looking through this play which I am returning to you, sir, I shuddered to find myself praised in it. I cannot accept this horrible present. I am sure that you did not intend to insult me by sending it, but either you do not know, or you have forgotten, that I once had the honour to be the friend of a man who deserves respect but has been unworthily defamed and libelled in this scurrilous production.

Duchesne showed this letter round. Diderot, who should have been touched by it, was annoyed. His pride could not forgive me the superiority of having performed a generous action, and I knew that

* *Les Philosophes*.

his wife inveighed against me everywhere with a bitterness which hardly affected me, since everyone knew her to be a fishwife.

Diderot, in his turn, found an avenger in the Abbé Morellet, who wrote a pamphlet in the style of *The Little Prophet* entitled *The Vision*,* in which he very rashly insulted Mme de Robeck. Her friends then had him consigned to the Bastille, though she, who was not at all vindictive by nature and was at the time a dying woman, had I am sure no part in the affair.

D'Alembert, who was on intimate terms with the Abbé Morellet, wrote and asked me to beg Mme de Luxembourg to secure his release, promising her in return some praise in the *Encyclopaedia*.† Here is my reply:

I did not wait for your letter, sir, before expressing to Mme de Luxembourg the pain which the Abbé Morellet's imprisonment has caused me. She knows the interest I take in the matter, she shall hear of your interest in it, and it will be enough for her to know that he is a man of merit for her to be interested on his behalf as well. Nevertheless, although she and the Marshal honour me with a kindness which is the consolation of my life, and although your friend's name is in their eyes a recommendation in the Abbé Morellet's favour, I do not know how fitting they may consider it, on this occasion, to employ the influence of their high rank or the personal esteem which they enjoy. I am not even sure that the Princess de Robeck was as much concerned in this act of vengeance as you appear to think; and even if she were, it must not be supposed that the pleasure of avenging oneself is confined exclusively to philosophers, or that when they choose to behave like women, women will, in their turn, behave like philosophers.

I will inform you of what Mme de Luxembourg says to me when I show her your letter. In the meantime, I think that I know her well enough to assure you in advance that, should she have the pleasure of contributing to the Abbé Morellet's release, she would not accept the acknowledgement you promise to make her in the 'Encyclopaedia', although she might feel honoured by it. For she does not do good in order to gain praise, but to satisfy her kindness of heart.

I spared no efforts to rouse Mme de Luxembourg's interest and pity in favour of the unfortunate prisoner, and I succeeded. She made a trip to Versailles on purpose to see the Count de Saint-Florentin; and this trip cut short her visit to Montmorency. The Marshal was obliged to depart at the same time for Rouen, where the King sent him, as

* *La Vision*.

† This letter with several others disappeared from the Hôtel de Luxembourg when my papers were stored there.

Governor of Normandy, to deal with certain agitation in the Courts which it was desired to suppress. Here is the letter which Mme de Luxembourg wrote to me the day after his departure (Packet B, No. 23):

Versailles, Wednesday

M. de Luxembourg left yesterday at six in the morning. I do not yet know whether I shall go. I am waiting to hear from him, since he does not himself know how long he will be there. I have seen M. de Saint-Florentin, who could not be more favourably disposed towards the Abbé Morellet. But I can see obstacles, which he nevertheless hopes to overcome next time he has to see the King, which will be next week. I have also asked as a favour that he shall not be banished, for there was some question of that; they thought of sending him to Nancy. That, sir, is all I have been able to do. But I assure you that I will give M. de Saint-Florentin no peace until the affair is concluded in the way that you wish. Let me tell you now how sorry I am to have left you so soon. But I flatter myself that you have no doubts on that score. I love you with all my heart, and for all my life.

Some days later I received this note (Packet D, No. 26) from d'Alembert, which gave me real joy:

Thanks to your efforts, my dear philosopher, the Abbé has been released from the Bastille, and his arrest will have no further consequences. He is leaving for the country and joins me in sending you a thousand compliments and thanks. *Vale, et me ama.**

The Abbé also wrote me a letter of thanks (Packet D, No. 29) several days afterwards, which did not appear to me to come straight from the heart, and in which he appeared rather to depreciate the service I had done him; and a little later I discovered that he and d'Alembert had, in a sense, I will not say supplanted, but succeeded me with Mme de Luxembourg, and that I had lost that amount of her favour that they had gained. However, I am very far from suspecting the Abbé Morellet of having contributed to my undoing; I respect him too much for that. As for M. d'Alembert, I will say nothing about him here, but I shall speak of him again later on.

At the same time I was involved in another affair which occasioned the last letter I ever wrote to M. de Voltaire, a letter which roused him to shrill protests as if against some abominable insult, but which he never showed to anybody. I will here supply his omission.

The Abbé Trublet, whom I hardly knew but had occasionally met,

* Farewell, and love me.

wrote to me on 13 June 1760 (Packet D, No. 11) to inform me that his friend and correspondent, M. Formey, had printed my letter to M. de Voltaire on the Lisbon disaster in his journal. The Abbé was anxious to know how this publication could have taken place and, in his crafty Jesuitical way, asked me my opinion about the reprinting of this letter without vouchsafing his own. As I thoroughly loathe tricksters of that sort, I returned him such thanks as were proper, but with a certain stiffness in my tone. This he noticed, but it did not prevent his wheedling another two or three letters out of me, until he had found out all he wanted to know.

I was well aware, whatever Trublet might say, that Formey had not found that letter printed, but had printed it himself for the first time. I knew him for an unscrupulous pilferer who quite shamelessly made money out of other people's works, although he had not yet had the incredible effrontery to remove the author's name from a book already published, put in his own and sell it for his own profit.* But how had that manuscript reached him? That was a question which was not difficult to answer, but I was simple enough to be puzzled by it. Although I had treated Voltaire in that letter with excessive consideration, I decided to write to him on the subject since, after all, despite his dishonest behaviour, if I had printed it without his consent he would have been justified in complaining. Here is this second letter to which he made no reply, and by which, in order to give full rein to his boorishness, he pretended to have been madly irritated:

Montmorency

I did not expect, sir, ever to be in correspondence with you again. But having learnt that the letter I wrote to you in 1756 has been printed in Berlin, I feel it my duty to give you an account of my conduct in this matter, a duty which I shall fulfil with all truth and simplicity.

This letter, being actually addressed to you, was not intended for publication. I communicated its contents, on conditions, to three persons, from whom the rights of friendship forbade me to withhold anything of this nature, but who were even more closely bound by those same rights to respect my confidence and keep their promise of secrecy. These three persons are: Mme de Chenonceaux, Mme Dupin's daughter-in-law, the Countess d'Houdetot, and a German named Grimm. Mme de Chenonceaux wished the letter to be printed, and asked for my consent. I said that it depended upon yours. You were asked for yours, you refused and the matter dropped.

However the Abbé Trublet, with whom I have no sort of connexion,

* Which is what he subsequently did to *Émile*.

has just written to me, as a mark of the friendliest consideration, that on receiving issues of a journal published by M. Formey, he found this same letter printed in it with an advertisement, dated 23 October 1759, in which the publisher said that he had found it some weeks before in the Berlin bookshops and, it being one of those casual pamphlets which quickly disappear never to return, decided that he ought to find a place for it in his paper.

That, sir, is all that I know. It is quite certain that up till now there has not even been a rumour of its existence in Paris. It is equally certain that the copy, whether printed or in manuscript, which fell into M. Formey's hands, can only have reached him from you – which is improbable – or from one of the three persons I have named. And lastly, it is also certain that the two ladies are incapable of such a breach of trust. From my retirement I can get no further information. You have correspondents through whom it would be easy for you, if it were worth your while, to trace this matter to its source and ascertain the facts.

In the same letter the Abbé Trublet informs me that he is keeping that issue back, and will not lend it without my consent, which I assuredly shall never give. But this copy may not be the only one in Paris. I hope, sir, that the letter will not be printed there, and I shall do my best to prevent its being so. But in case I am unable to do so but, being informed in time, can myself make a prior claim to it, then I shall not hesitate to have it printed myself. This seems to me just and natural.

As for your reply to the same letter, it has been shown to no one, and you can count on its not being printed without your consent,* which I certainly shall never be so indiscreet as to ask for, since I am well aware that what one man writes to another is not intended for the public. But if you like to prepare an answer for publication and to address it to me, I promise you to append it faithfully to my letter, without so much as a word of refutation on my part.

I do not like you, sir. You have done me injuries which could not be anything but extremely painful to me – to me, your disciple and admirer. In gratitude for the refuge she gave you, you have ruined the city of Geneva. In gratitude for the praise I have lavished on you when among them, you have alienated my fellow-citizens from me. It is you who have made life in my native land unbearable to me. It is you who will cause me to die on foreign soil, deprived of all a dying man's consolations, and so little honoured as to be thrown into the gutter, whilst all the honours a man can expect will follow you to your grave in *my* country. In fact I hate you, since you have willed it so; but I hate you as a man better fitted to love you, had you so willed it. Of all the feelings towards you which filled my heart, there remains only that admiration

* That is to say during his lifetime and mine; and surely the utmost scrupulosity, especially in dealing with a man who tramples all scruples underfoot, cannot demand more.

which cannot be denied to your splendid genius, and a love for your writings. If I can honour nothing about you but your talents it is not my fault. I shall never fail in the respect which is due to them, or in the actions which that respect demands. Farewell, sir.*

In the midst of all these little literary squabbles, which confirmed me more and more in my resolution, I received the greatest honour that literature has ever brought me, and one by which I was greatly moved, in the two visits which the Prince de Conti condescended to make me, the first in the Little Château, and the second at Mont-Louis. Both times he chose occasions when Mme de Luxembourg was not at Montmorency, in order to make it plainer to me that he came only to see me. I have never doubted that I owed his kindness in the first place to Mme de Luxembourg and Mme de Boufflers, but neither do I doubt that I am indebted to his own feelings and to myself for the attentions with which he has continually honoured me since that time.†

As my apartment at Mont-Louis was very small, and the situation of my turret delightful, I led the Prince there when, to crown his favours, he desired that I should have the honour of playing chess with him. I knew that he could beat the Chevalier de Lorenzi, who was a better player than I. Nevertheless, despite the gestures and grimaces of the Chevalier and the attendants, which I pretended not to see, I won the two games that we played. As we finished I said to him in a respectful but serious voice: 'My lord, I honour your most Serene Highness too deeply not to beat you on all occasions at chess.' That great prince, who had real wit and knowledge, and indeed deserved to be spared from flattery, really felt – or at least I thought so – that I was the only person there who treated him as a man, and I have every reason to believe that he was truly grateful to me for it.

Even if he had resented it I could not reproach myself with having wished to deceive him in any way, and I have no reason to reproach myself either with having failed to respond to his kindnesses in my

*It will be observed that, although this letter was written almost seven years ago, I have never spoken of it or shown it to a living soul. The same was true of the two letters which Mr Hume forced me to write to him last summer, until he made the fuss about them which everyone knows of. The evil I have had to say of my enemies I have told them in private to their faces; the good, when there is any, I say openly and with a glad heart.

†Observe how my blind and stupid confidence persisted through all my persecutions, which should have cured me of it. It never left me till after my return to Paris in 1770.

heart, though I sometimes responded to them rather grudgingly, whereas he displayed infinite delicacy in his way of performing them. A few days later he sent me a hamper of game, which I accepted in due form. Some time after that he sent me another, with a note written by one of his huntsmen on his instructions to say that the game came from his Highness's hunt and had been killed by his own hand. I accepted this gift also, but I wrote to Mme de Boufflers that I would take no more. This letter was generally censured, and deservedly so. To refuse presents of game from a Prince of the Blood, who moreover displays such tact in sending them, is more like the behaviour of an ignorant and presumptuous boor than of a proud man of feeling, anxious to preserve his independence. I have never re-read that letter in my collection without a blush, and without reproaching myself for having written it. But I did not embark on my *Confessions* in order to be silent about my stupidities, and I find this instance far too disgusting to permit of its being passed over in silence.

If I did not commit the foolishness of becoming his rival, I narrowly escaped doing so. For Mme de Boufflers was still his mistress at the time, and I did not know it. She came quite often to see me with the Chevalier de Lorenzi. She was beautiful and still young, and was an enthusiast for ancient Rome. I was always romantic, and the two moods were not far apart. I was nearly caught. I think that she saw it, and the Chevalier saw it too. At least he said something about it and in language not intended to discourage me. But for this once I was sensible, and at fifty it was time. Full of the lesson I had just read the greybeards in my *Letter to d'Alembert*, I was ashamed of taking it so little to heart myself. Moreover, having now learnt what I had not known before, I should have had to be completely crazy to enter into such exalted competition. Lastly, being perhaps not entirely cured of my passion for Mme d'Houdetot, I felt that no one could take her place in my heart, and said farewell to love for the rest of my life. At the moment of writing this, a young woman with designs of her own has just been making dangerous advances to me; her glance is most disturbing. But though she has pretended to forget my sixty years, I have remembered them. After having saved myself from this false step, I no longer fear a fall. I can answer for myself for the rest of my days.

Having perceived the emotion she caused me, Mme de Boufflers could also see that I had triumphed over it. I am neither stupid enough nor vain enough to believe that I could have inspired any feeling in

her at my age. But from certain remarks that she made to Thérèse, I concluded that I had aroused her curiosity. If that is so, and she has not forgiven me for foiling that curiosity, then I must confess indeed that I was born to be the victim of my weaknesses, since triumphant love has been so fatal to me, and vanquished love more deadly still.

Here ends the collection of letters which has served me as a guide in these last two books. Now I can only follow the tracks of my memory. But they are so strong when I come to this cruel period, and have left such a vivid impression upon me that, lost in the vast sea of my misfortunes, I cannot forget the details of my first shipwreck, although what followed it has left me only confused recollections. Accordingly, in my next book I can still proceed with reasonable assurance. If I go further, then I shall be groping in the dark.

BOOK ELEVEN

1761 Although *Julie*, which had been in the press for a long time, had not yet appeared at the end of 1760, it was beginning to make a great stir. Mme de Luxembourg had talked about it at Court, and Mme d'Houdetot in Paris. Indeed she had even obtained my permission, on behalf of Saint-Lambert, for it to be read in manuscript to the King of Poland, who had been delighted with it. Duclos, to whom I had also had it read, had spoken of it at the Academy. All Paris was eager to see my novel. The booksellers in the Rue Saint-Jacques and the one in the Palais-Royal were besieged by people asking for news of it. At last it appeared, and its success, contrary to custom, was as great as the excitement with which it had been awaited. The Dauphiness, who had been one of the first to read it, spoke of it to M. de Luxembourg as a ravishing work. Opinions differed among men of letters, but in the world the verdict was unanimous, and the women especially were wild about the book and its author. Such was their infatuation indeed that there were few of them, even of the highest rank, whose conquest I could not have made if I had attempted it. I have proofs of this which I do not care to write down, proofs which did not require putting to the test but which confirm my opinion. It is strange that this book was more successful in France than in the rest of Europe, although the French, both men and women, are not too well treated in it. Contrary to my expectation, its least success was in Switzerland, and its greatest in Paris. Do friendship, love, and virtue prevail in Paris, then, to a greater extent than elsewhere? No, indeed! But there still prevails there that delicate sensibility which moves the heart when they are displayed, and which makes us cherish those pure, tender, and honest feelings in others which we no longer possess ourselves. Corruption at present is everywhere the same; virtue and morality have ceased to exist in Europe; if some love for them still survives it is in Paris that it is to be found.*

Amidst so many prejudices and simulated passions, one must be a skilled analyst of the human heart to disentangle the true feelings of Nature. It requires a delicacy of understanding that can only be acquired in the school of the world to detect the niceties of feeling, if

* I wrote this in 1769.

I may so describe them, of which that work is full. I am not afraid to compare the Fourth Part with the *Princesse de Clèves*,* and I assert that if these two works had only been read in the provinces their full value would never have been known. It is not surprising, therefore, that the book's greatest success was at Court. It abounds in sharp but veiled touches, which were bound to give pleasure there since those at Court are more adept in discovering them. However, a further distinction must here be made. The work is by no means suitable for that sort of intelligence that is merely sharp, for people who have only the discernment to see through what is bad, and who can detect absolutely nothing when there is only good to see. If, for instance, *Julie* had been published in a certain country that I have in mind† I am sure that no one would have read it to the end, and that it would have been still-born.

I have collected the majority of the letters written to me on the subject of this book in a packet which is in the keeping of Mme de Nadaillac. If ever that collection appears, there will be some strange things revealed, and amongst them a clash of opinion which will show what it means to have dealings with the public. The thing that was least noticed, and one which will always make it a unique work, is the simplicity of the subject, and the sustained interest which, though confined to three characters, is kept up throughout six volumes, which contain no incidents, no romantic adventures, and no improprieties of any kind, either in the characters or the action. Diderot has paid Richardson high compliments on the prodigious variety of his scenes and the number of his characters, and Richardson has indeed the virtue of having given them all individuality. But, as for their number, that is a feature he shares with the most mediocre of novelists who make up for the sterility of their ideas by multiplying their characters and adventures. It is easy to rouse the attention by incessantly introducing amazing events and new faces, which pass like the figures in a magic lantern. But it is certainly more difficult to hold that attention always to the same objects without the aid of marvellous adventures. And if, other things being equal, the simplicity of the subject enhances the beauty of the work, Richardson's novels, though in so many other ways superior, could not be compared to mine in this respect. *Julie* is dead, however, as I know, and I know the reason; but it will come to life again.

[* Novel by Mme de Lafayette.]

[† Rousseau probably means England.]

My only fear was that because of its extreme simplicity, the development of my story might have been tedious, and that I had not been able to provide enough interest to hold the reader to the end. On this point I was reassured by a single incident which flattered me more than all the compliments that the work brought me.

It appeared at the beginning of Carnival-time, and a book-hawker took it to the Princess de Talmont* one day when there was a ball at the Opera. After supper she got dressed to go and started to read the new novel until it was time. At midnight she ordered her horses to be put in, and went on reading. When they came to tell her that her coach was ready, she did not answer. Her servants noticed her absence of mind and came to warn her that it was two o'clock. 'There is no hurry yet,' she said, and went on reading. Some time later, her watch having stopped, she rang to know the hour. She was told that it was four o'clock. 'That being the case,' she said, 'it is too late to go to the ball. Take out the horses.' Then she had herself undressed and spent the rest of the night reading.

Since I was told this story I have always wanted to meet Mme de Talmont, not only to learn from her own lips whether it is absolutely true, but also because I have always believed that no one could take so lively an interest in *Héloïse* without possessing that sixth sense, that moral sensibility, with which so few hearts are endowed and without which no one could understand my own.

What won me the women's favour was their belief that I had written my own story, and that I was myself the hero of my novel. This belief was so firmly established that Mme de Polignac wrote to Mme de Verdelin, begging her to persuade me to let her see Julie's portrait. Everybody was convinced that it was impossible to express feelings so vividly unless one had felt them, or so to depict the raptures of love except with one's own heart as model. In that they were right, and it is true that I wrote the novel in a state of burning ecstasy. But they were wrong in supposing that I had required real objects to produce that condition. They were far from imagining how enraptured I could be by creatures of the imagination. But for some reminiscences of my youth and of Mme d'Houdetot, the loves I have felt and described might have been no more than the nymphs of the air. I refused either to confirm or deny an error that redounded to my advantage. The preface in dialogue, which I caused to be printed

* It was not she, but another lady whose name I do not know; but I have been assured that the tale is true.

separately, will show how I left the public in suspense on that point. Rigid moralists may say that I should frankly have declared the truth. For my part, I cannot see what there was to compel me, and I think I should have shown more stupidity than frankness if I had made an unnecessary declaration.

At about the same time appeared my *Perpetual Peace*, the manuscript of which I had handed over in the preceding years to a certain M. de Bastide, editor of a journal called *The World*,* into which, whether I liked it or not, he was anxious to pack all my writings. He was an acquaintance of M. Duclos, and came on his introduction to beg for my help in filling his journal. He had heard of *Julie*, and wanted me to let it appear there. He wanted *Émile* as well, and he would have asked me to give him *The Social Contract* if he had known of its existence. Finally, worn out by his badgering, I decided to give him my extracts from *The Perpetual Peace* for twelve louis. Our agreement was that he should print it in his paper. But as soon as he had possession of the manuscript he thought fit to have it printed separately with some cuts required by the censor. What would have happened if I had appended my own criticism of the work, which fortunately I never mentioned to M. de Bastide, and which was not included in our bargain! This criticism is still in manuscript among my papers. If ever it appears the world will see what amusement I must have derived from Voltaire's witticisms and his complacency on this subject. For I well knew the poor man's incapacity for those matters of politics on which he ventured to hold forth.

In the midst of my popular success and at the height of my favour with the ladies, I felt myself losing ground at the Hôtel de Luxembourg, not with the Marshal, who seemed to redouble his kindnesses and his friendship for me every day, but with Mme de Luxembourg. Now that I had nothing more to read to her I was less free of her room; and though I called with great regularity during her visits to Montmorency I hardly saw her any more except at table. Now, even the place at her side was no longer reserved for me. As she had ceased to offer me that favour and spoke to me very little, and as I had not a great deal to say to her either, I was just as glad to take another seat where I was more at my ease, particularly in the evenings. For unconsciously I was gradually acquiring the habit of sitting nearer the Marshal.

Apròpos of the evenings, I remember having said that I did not

* *Le Monde*.

take supper at the Château, and that was true at the beginning of our acquaintance. But since M. de Luxembourg never dined, and did not even sit down to table, the result was that at the end of several months, although already very intimate in the house, I had never taken a meal with him. He was so kind as to remark on this fact; and this decided me to sup there sometimes, when there was not much company. I came off very well by this, seeing that we dined more or less in the open air and, as they say, off the edge of the table, whereas supper was a very long meal, because the guests enjoyed lingering over it as a rest after their long walk. It was very good too, because M. de Luxembourg was fond of his food, and very pleasant since Mme de Luxembourg was a charming hostess. Without this explanation it would be difficult to understand the end of a letter from M. de Luxembourg (Packet C, No. 36) in which he tells me that he remembers our walks with very great pleasure; especially, he adds, when on our return in the evening we found no marks of carriage wheels in the courtyard. For as the gravel was raked over every morning to remove the ruts, I could tell by the number of wheel tracks how many people had come that afternoon.

That year (1761) marked the climax of the continual losses suffered by that good gentleman since I had had the honour of knowing him. It was as if the ills which fate had in store for me had begun by striking the man to whom I was most deeply attached and who was most worthy of my love. In the first year he lost his sister, the Duchess of Villeroy; in the second his daughter, the Princess de Robeck; in the third he lost his only son, the Duke de Montmorency, and the Count de Luxembourg, his grandson: the last representatives of his branch and bearers of his name. He bore all these losses with apparent courage; but his heart did not cease to bleed within for the rest of his life, and his health gradually declined. The unforeseen and tragic death of his son must have been all the more grievous to him for occurring precisely at the moment when the King had granted him for that son, and promised him for his grandson, the reversion of his commission as Captain of the Bodyguard. He had the pain of watching the child, in whom he had placed his greatest hopes, gradually fade away; and this because of his mother's blind trust in a doctor who let the poor child die of sheer starvation, feeding him on nothing but drugs. Alas, if only they had listened to me, grandfather and grandson would both be alive still. I said everything I could, I wrote to the Marshal, and made every possible protest to Mme de Montmorency against this

worse than austere diet which, in her trust of the doctor, she imposed on her son. Mme de Luxembourg, who thought as I did, was unwilling to usurp a mother's authority; M. de Luxembourg, who was mild and weak, did not like to make opposition; and Mme de Montmorency's faith in Bordeu was so implicit that her son finally fell a victim to it. How pleased the poor child was when he could get permission to come to Mont-Louis with Mme de Boufflers, when he would ask Thérèse for something to eat and put a little nourishment into his famished stomach! How I deplored the miseries of the great, in secret, when I saw the sole heir to so huge an estate, to so great a name, to such titles and dignities, devouring a wretched morsel of bread like a hungry beggar! In the end, despite all that I said and did, the doctor triumphed and the child died of starvation.

The same trust in quacks which destroyed the grandson dug the grandfather's grave also. But he worsened the situation by his weak-minded attempts to conceal from himself the infirmities of old age. M. de Luxembourg had occasionally had some pain in his big toe; he had one attack at Montmorency which gave him insomnia and a slight fever. I dared to mention the word gout but M. de Luxembourg gave me a trouncing. The underling who acted as M. de Luxembourg's surgeon maintained that it was not gout, and proceeded to dress the affected part with a healing ointment. Unfortunately the pain died down and, when it returned, they of course applied the same remedy that had previously given relief. His constitution grew weaker, his pains increased, and so did the remedies. Mme de Luxembourg, who saw at last that it was gout, opposed this senseless treatment. They concealed his condition from her, and M. de Luxembourg died after a few years, through his own fault and his obstinate endeavours to cure himself. But let us not so far anticipate misfortunes. I have plenty of others to recount before that one.

It is strange by what fatality everything I might say or do seemed bound to displease Mme de Luxembourg, even when I was most concerned to preserve her goodwill. The disasters which overtook M. de Luxembourg in quick succession only served to strengthen my attachment to him, and therefore to Mme de Luxembourg. For they have always seemed to me so genuinely united that any feelings one had for the one necessarily extended to the other. The Marshal was growing old. His constant attendance at Court and the duties entailed, the continual hunts, and, even more, the fatigues of his three months in duty, would have required the strength of a young man, and I

could see nothing capable of sustaining him against such a strain. Since his honours would be dispersed and his name would die with him, there was little need for him to continue a laborious life, the principal object of which had been to obtain the Prince's favour for his children. One day when we three were alone and he was complaining of the fatigues of Court life, like a man depressed by his losses, I dared to speak to him of retirement, and to offer him the counsel which Cineas gave to Pyrrhus. He sighed, and gave me no definite answer. But the moment Mme de Luxembourg saw me alone she scolded me soundly for my advice, which seemed to have alarmed her. She added one thing the justice of which I could see, and which made me give up the idea of ever touching that note again. She said that the long habit of living at Court had made it a real need, that at that time it was a distraction for M. de Luxembourg, and that the retirement I suggested would be no rest for him but rather a form of exile, in which idleness, boredom, and melancholy would soon put an end to his life. Although she must have seen that she had convinced me, although she must have relied on the promise which I made her and kept, she never seemed to me quite easy on that score, and I remember that from that time on my conversations with the Marshal were less frequent, and were nearly always interrupted.

Whilst my awkwardness and bad luck thus united to injure me in her eyes, the people she saw and loved most were of no assistance to me. The Abbé de Boufflers, in particular, a young man of the utmost brilliance, never seemed well-disposed towards me; and not only was he the one person in Mme de Luxembourg's circle who never showed me the least attention, but I seemed to notice that on every visit he made to Montmorency I lost ground with her; and it is true that even if it was not intentional on his part his sole presence was enough to account for it, so dull did my heavy *spropositi** appear beside the grace and refinement of his wit. During the first two years he hardly came to Montmorency, and thanks to Mme de Luxembourg's indulgence I held my own fairly well. But as soon as he came at all regularly I was utterly routed. I should have liked to take refuge under his wing and do something to win his friendship. But the same stupidity which made it necessary for me to please him prevented me from doing so, and the awkward attempts which I made to win him finally undid me with Mme de Luxembourg, without being of any service to me with the Abbé. With his intellect he might have succeeded in anything;

* Absurdities.

but his inability to apply himself and his love of amusement have prevented his acquiring more than a half mastery of any accomplishment. By way of compensation his attainments are various, and that is all he needs in the great world where he is ambitious to shine. He writes occasional verse very well, composes pretty little letters, can strum a bit on the zither, and daub a little with pastels. He had the idea of doing Mme de Luxembourg's portrait. The result was horrible. She declared that it was not at all like her, and that was true. The treacherous Abbé consulted me; and I, like a fool and a liar, said that it was a likeness. I wanted to please the Abbé; but I did not please the lady, who noted it down against me; and the Abbé laughed at me, having scored his point. I learned from the ill-success of my tardy first attempt not to try and play the flatterer again, since I had no talent for it.

My talent was for telling men useful but unwelcome truths with some vigour and courage; and I ought to have stopped there. I was not born, I will not say to flatter, but to praise. The awkwardness of the praise I have tried to bestow has done me more harm than the severity of my censures. I have an example of this which I will quote, so terrible in its effects that it not only decided my fate for the remainder of my life, but will probably decide my reputation for all posterity.

During M. and Mme de Luxembourg's visits to Montmorency, M. de Choiseul sometimes came to supper at the Château. He came one evening after I had left. There was talk of me, and M. de Luxembourg told him my adventures in Venice with M. de Montaigu. M. de Choiseul said that it was a pity that I had abandoned that career, and that if I wanted to return to it he would be very glad to find me a post. M. de Luxembourg repeated this to me. I was particularly gratified since I was not used to being pampered by ministers, and I am not at all certain whether, if my health had permitted my considering it, I should not have made a fool of myself again despite all my resolutions. Ambition only prevailed with me in the short intervals when I was free from all other passions; but one of those intervals would have been enough to catch me again. This kind proposal of M. de Choiseul's won him my affection, and increased the admiration which certain actions of his ministry had given me for his talents; the Family Compact,* in particular, seemed to me the work of a first-class statesman. He gained still more in my estimation by the low opinion I had

[* The alliance of 1761 between the Bourbons of France and Spain.]

of his predecessors, not excepting Mme de Pompadour, whom I regarded as a sort of first minister; and when rumour had it that one of the two would drive out the other, I felt that I was praying for the glory of France when I prayed for M. de Choiseul's victory. I had always felt an antipathy for Mme de Pompadour, even when I met her at Mme de Popelinière's, before her rise to power and when she was still Mme d'Étioles. Since then I had been displeased by her silence on the subject of Diderot and by her whole treatment of me, in the matter of *Ramiro's Feast* and the *Gallant Muses*, and also over *The Village Soothsayer* which had never brought me in any sort of profit proportionate to its success. On no occasion indeed had I found her at all disposed to be of service to me; which did not prevent the Chevalier de Lorenzi from proposing that I should write something in that lady's praise, and hinting at the same time that this might be useful to me. This suggestion particularly annoyed me, since I clearly saw that he was not making it of his own accord. For I knew that the man was a nonentity in himself, and never thought or acted except at the instance of someone else. I am not sufficiently capable of self-restraint to have been able to hide from him my contempt for his proposal, or from anyone else my dislike for the favourite, of which I am sure she was herself aware. So it was that my self-interest and my natural inclinations combined together in framing the prayer I offered up for M. de Choiseul's victory. Prepossessed by my respect for his talents, which were all that I knew of him, full of gratitude for his kindly intentions and, moreover, totally ignorant in my retirement of his habits and way of life, I already considered him the avenger of the people and of myself. And as I was then putting the finishing touches to *The Social Contract*, I set down in a single passage my opinion of the preceding ministries and of the one which was beginning to eclipse them. On this occasion I failed to observe my most constant principle and, what is more, it did not occur to me that when one wants to administer strong praise and blame in the same article, without mentioning names, one must so apply the praise to those for whom it is intended that the most ticklish pride cannot find anything ambiguous about it. In this respect I felt so foolishly secure that it never even occurred to me that anyone could make a false application. It will soon be seen whether I was right.

It had always been one of my misfortunes to be connected with authoresses. I expected to be free from them at least among the great. But I was not; that misfortune pursued me. Mme de Luxembourg was

ver, as far as I know, attacked by the complaint, but the Countess Boufflers was. She wrote a tragedy in prose, which was at first ad, circulated, and praised in the Prince de Conti's circle. But not satisfied with all their eulogies, she turned to me to secure mine too. I gave it to her, but only in moderation, as the work deserved. I also formed her, as I thought only fair, that her play entitled *The Noble Slave** was very close to a little known English piece, which had however been translated, entitled *Oroonoko*.† Mme de Boufflers thanked me for my opinion, but assured me at the same time that her play was not at all like the English one. I have never spoken of her plagiarism to anyone in the world but her, and then only in fulfilment of a duty which she had imposed on me. Nevertheless I have often remembered since then the way in which Gil Blas fulfilled his duty to the preaching archbishop, and its results.

Not only the Abbé de Boufflers, who did not like me, and Mme de Boufflers, whom I had offended in a way that neither women nor authors forgive, but the rest of Mme de Luxembourg's friends too, have always seemed to me most reluctant to become mine, among others President Hénaut, who featured as an author and was not exempt from an author's failings; also Mme de Deffand and Mlle de Espinasse, both very intimate with Voltaire and close friends of d'Alembert, with whom the latter finally lived – in all respectability of course. Let it not be imagined that I mean otherwise. I had begun by feeling a strong sympathy for Mme du Deffand, whose loss of sight aroused my commiseration. But her way of life, so contrary to mine that one of us got up almost as the other went to bed; her unbounded passion for displays of trivial wit; the importance she attached, for good or for evil, to every wretched rag that appeared; the peremptoriness and violence of her oracular statements; her wild repossessions for or against everything, which prevented her speaking on any subject without hysteria; her incredible prejudices; her invincible obstinacy; the transports of unreason roused in her by headstrong and passionate judgements: all this soon discouraged me from paying her the attentions I should have liked to. I neglected her, and she was conscious of it. That was enough to put her in a fury; and though I was well aware how much there was to fear from a woman of her character I preferred to expose myself to the scourge of her hatred rather than to that of her friendship.

* *L'Esclave généreux*.

[† An adaptation by T. Southerne of Mrs Aphra Behn's novel.]

As if it was not enough to have so few friends in Mme de Luxembourg's circle, I had also enemies in her family. Only one indeed, but one who, in the situation I am in at present, is equal to a hundred. It was not her brother, the Duke de Villeroy, however. For not only had he come to see me, but he had several times invited me to Villeroy; and as I had answered his invitation with all possible respect and politeness he had taken my vague reply for an acceptance, and arranged with M. and Mme de Luxembourg that they should stay with him for a fortnight, and that I should be of the party. This was proposed to me. But as the care my health then required made it risky for me to move anywhere, I begged M. de Luxembourg to be so kind as to make my excuses for me. It can be seen from his reply (Packet D, No. 3) that I was excused with the best grace in the world; and the Duke de Villeroy showed me no less kindness afterwards than before. His nephew and heir, the young Marquis de Villeroy, did not share the benevolence with which his uncle honoured me, nor, I must confess, had I the same respect for him. His hare-brained behaviour made him unbearable to me, and my coldness drew down his dislike. One evening at table he made an insulting attack on me, from which I came off badly since I am stupid and lacking in presence of mind, and anger instead of sharpening the little I have got deprives me of it altogether. I had a dog which had been given me as a puppy very soon after I had moved to the Hermitage, and which I had then called 'Duke'. The creature was not handsome but of an uncommon breed, and had become my friend and constant companion. As for his name, he certainly deserved it better than the majority who have assumed it. He had become famous at the castle of Montmorency for his intelligent and affectionate nature and for the fondness we felt for one another. But out of a foolish weakness I had changed his name to 'Turk', as if there were not countless dogs called 'Marquis' without any Marquis feeling insulted by the fact. The Marquis de Villeroy, who knew about this change of name, pressed me so hard that I was obliged to tell the story of what I had done before all the company. Now the offensive side of it was not so much that I had originally called the dog Duke but that I had altered his name, and the trouble was that there were several dukes present. M. de Luxembourg was there, and so was his son. The Marquis de Villeroy, who was heir to a duke, and now bears the title, took a cruel delight in the embarrassment he had put me into, and in the effect which that embarrassment had produced. I was assured next day that his aunt had given him a good

scolding for his behaviour; but it may be judged whether her reprimand, if actually given, served to improve the terms I was on with him.

The only support I had against all this, both at the Hôtel de Luxembourg and at the Temple, was the Chevalier de Lorenzi, who professed to be my friend. But he was far more the friend of d'Alembert, under whose wing he passed among the ladies for a great geometrician. He was besides the professed, or rather the complaisant, lover of the Countess de Boufflers, herself a very close friend of d'Alembert; and the Chevalier had no existence and no thoughts apart from her. So far from my having any outside counterpoise against my own ineptitude to keep me in Mme de Luxembourg's favour, everybody who came near her seemed to combine to injure me in her eyes. However, in addition to her kind offer to look after *Émile*, she showed me another mark of interest and benevolence at that time, which made me think that, even if she were growing tired of me, she preserved, and always would preserve, the friendship that she had so often promised me should be lifelong.

The moment I had thought that I could depend upon her feelings for me, I began to relieve my heart by making her a confession of all my faults, it being an inviolable principle with me always to show myself to my friends exactly as I am, neither better nor worse. I had informed her of my relations with Thérèse and of all their consequences, not omitting the manner in which I had disposed of my children. She had received my confessions very well, too well indeed, and spared me the censure which I deserved; and what made a particularly strong impression on me was to see the kindnesses she lavished on Thérèse, making her little presents, sending for her, begging her to come and see her, and embracing her very often before everybody. The poor girl was transported with joy and gratitude, which I certainly shared. For the kindnesses with which M. and Mme de Luxembourg overwhelmed me through her touched me more even than those shown directly to me.

For a considerable time things remained on that footing. But in the end Mme de Luxembourg extended her kindness so far as to offer to adopt one of my children. She knew that I had put a monogram on the eldest one's linen, and asked me for the duplicate of it, which I gave her. She entrusted the search to La Roche, her valet and confidential servant. But his inquiries were fruitless and he discovered nothing, though after only twelve or fourteen years the monogram should not have been untraceable if the Foundling Hospital's records

had been in order and the search had been properly made. However that may be, I was less annoyed by his failure than I should have been if I had kept track of the child from its birth. If on the basis of their information some child had been presented to me as mine, the doubt whether it really was so or whether another had been substituted for it would have racked my heart with uncertainty, and I should not have tasted the true feelings of Nature in all their charm. For, to survive, they require to be sustained by habit, at least during the child's infancy. Long separation from a child one does not yet know weakens and finally destroys paternal and maternal feeling; and one will never love a child one has put out to nurse as much as one suckled under one's own eyes. This reflection may make the consequences of my faults seem less serious, but it adds to the guilt of their original committing.

There may be some point in my observing that, through Thérèse's agency, this same La Roche made the acquaintance of Mme Le Vasseur, whom Grimm still kept at Deuil, close to La Chevrette and not very far from Montmorency. After I left, it was through M. La Roche that I continued to send this woman the money I never ceased to supply her with. As for Grimm, since I am not fond of talking about people I cannot help hating I never mentioned him to Mme de Luxembourg, unless I was obliged to. But several times she brought his name into the conversation, without ever saying what she thought of him or giving me a chance to discover whether she was acquainted with him or not. Since reticence towards people one loves and who are quite open with one is not at all to my taste, especially on subjects of interest to them, this reserve of hers has sometimes struck me since then, though only when other events have recalled it naturally to my mind.

After waiting for a long time since handing *Émile* to Mme de Luxembourg without receiving any news of it, I finally heard that a bargain had been concluded in Paris with Duchesne, the bookseller, and by him with the firm of Néaulme of Amsterdam. Mme de Luxembourg sent me two copies of my agreement with Duchesne to sign. I recognized the handwriting as that of M. de Malesherbes's letters when he did not write them himself. Certain, therefore, that the agreement had been made with the consent and under the eyes of that official, I put my signature to it with confidence. Duchesne gave me six thousand francs for the manuscript, half of it in cash, and I think two or three hundred copies. After I had signed the agreement

in duplicate I sent both the documents back to Mme de Luxembourg, at her request. She gave one to Duchesne, and kept the other instead of returning it to me. I have never seen it since.

Although my acquaintance with M. and Mme de Luxembourg had deflected me to some extent from my plan of retirement, it had not caused me to abandon it. Even at the time when I was most in favour with Madame, I always felt that only my sincere affection for the Marshal and for her could make their world bearable for me. My whole difficulty was to combine my attachment to them with a way of life more consonant with my tastes and less injurious to my health, which was continuously upset by my sense of strain and by all their suppers, despite the care that was taken to avoid imperilling it in any way. For instance, every evening, after the meal, the Marshal, who went to bed early, would unfailingly take me out with him, whether I wished it or not, so that I might do the same. It was not till a little time before my disaster that he gave up paying me that attention, I do not know why.

Even before I was conscious of Mme de Luxembourg's cooling off I decided not to take the risk of it but to carry out my old plan. But, as I had not the means to do so, I was obliged to wait until the contract for *Émile* was completed; and while I waited I put the finishing touches to *The Social Contract*, which I sent to Rey, fixing the price for the manuscript at a thousand francs, which he gave me. Perhaps I should not pass over one little incident concerning this same manuscript. I handed it, well sealed, to Duvoisin, a Vaudois minister and chaplain at the Dutch Residence, who came to see me sometimes and undertook to send it to Rey, with whom he was in touch. The manuscript was written in a very fine hand, and was so small that it fitted easily into his pocket. However, as he passed the excise barrier,* it somehow or another fell into the hands of the clerks, who opened it, examined it, and returned it to him immediately on his claiming it in the name of the ambassador. This gave him the opportunity of reading it himself which, as he naïvely informed me, he did, and at the same time praised the work most highly. Not a word of criticism or censure did he utter, though he was no doubt reserving for himself the part of Christian avenger for the moment when the work appeared. He resealed the manuscript, and sent it to Rey. This is substantially the story that he told me in his letter which gave an account of the matter, and that is all I have heard about it.

[* On the outskirts of Paris, where the dues (or *octroi*) were collected.]

Besides these two books and my *Dictionary of Music*, on which I still worked from time to time, I had some other writings of less importance, all ready for publication, which I intended to produce also, either separately or with my complete works, should I ever undertake such a collection. The chief of these writings, the majority of which are still in manuscript in Du Peyrou's care, was an *Essay upon the Origin of Language*, which I had someone read to M. de Malesherbes and to the Chevalier de Lorenzi, the latter of whom complimented me upon it. I reckoned that all these productions together would bring me in a clear sum of at least eight to ten thousand francs, with which I intended to buy a life annuity for myself and Thérèse. After this we were to go, as I have said, and live together in some provincial corner, where I would cease to bother the public about my affairs and to bother myself about anything except ending my career in peace, whilst continuing to do all the good I could in my own vicinity and at the same time writing the memoirs I was contemplating, at my leisure.

Such was my plan, and it was rendered considerably more practicable by Rey's generosity, which I must not pass over in silence. That publisher, of whom I had heard so much that was bad in Paris, is none the less the only man I have done business with whom I have always had reason to praise.* It is true that we had frequent disputes about the publication of my books; he was careless and I was excitable. But so far as payments and matters of that sort are concerned I have always found him most punctilious and most scrupulous, though I have never made any formal agreements with him. He is also the only man who has ever frankly admitted to me that I brought him in a good profit. He has often said that he owes his fortune to me, and offered to share it with me. Being unable to give me a direct proof of his gratitude, he tried to do so through the medium of my womenfolk, on whom he settled an annuity of three hundred francs, stating in the deed that it was an acknowledgement of the advantages he had obtained through me. This we settled between us, without display, protestations, or noise, and if I had not been the first to tell the world of it, no one would ever have known of the matter. I was so touched by this act of his that I have felt the warmest friendship for him ever since. Some time afterwards he asked me to stand godfather to one of

* When I wrote this I was far from imagining or conceiving, and still more from believing in the frauds I have since discovered in the printing of my works, frauds which he has been forced to admit.

my children, which I did; and one of my regrets in the situation to which I have been reduced is that I have been deprived of all means of testifying my affection for my god-daughter and her parents in a useful way. How is it that though I am so moved by the modest generosity of this publisher, I feel so little gratitude for the noisy attentions of all those exalted personages who pompously fill the air with tales of their alleged favours to me, the effects of which I have never felt? Is it their fault or mine? Is it boastfulness on their part or ungratefulness on mine? Intelligent reader, consider and decide. For my part I say no more.

This pension was a great help towards Thérèse's keep, and a great relief to me. But I was far from deriving any direct advantage from it myself, any more than from such presents as she received. She has always had the complete control of everything. If I looked after her money I rendered her a faithful account, and never put a halfpenny of it towards our common expenses, even when she was better off than I. *What is mine is ours*, I said to her, *and what is yours is yours*. Always in my dealings with her I have adhered to this principle, of which I have told her again and again. Those who have been base enough to accuse me of receiving through her hands what I refused to accept into mine have no doubt judged my heart by their own, and have had very little knowledge of mine. I would gladly eat with her any bread she had earned, but never any that she had been given. I appeal to her own testimony on this point both to-day and in the future, when by the course of nature she will have survived me. Unfortunately she has no knowledge of economy in anything. She is very improvident and extravagant, not out of vanity or greed but out of sheer thoughtlessness. No one on earth is perfect; and since there must be something to counterbalance her excellent qualities, I had rather she had faults, prejudicial though they are to us both, than vices, which might be less so. I have made unheard-of efforts, as once I did for Mamma, to accumulate a little hoard for her to fall back on in the future, but they have always been labour in vain. Neither she nor Mamma ever reckoned with herself and, notwithstanding all my endeavours, every penny was spent as soon as it came in. However simply Thérèse may dress, Rey's pension has never been enough to clothe her, and I have had to add to it from my own pocket every year. We were neither of us born ever to be rich, and I certainly do not reckon that among my misfortunes.

The Social Contract was speedily printed. The same was not true of *Émile*, for the publication of which I had to wait before going into the

retirement I had planned. Duchesne sent me occasional specimens of type to choose from. Then, when I had made my choice, instead of beginning he sent me still more. When at last we had thoroughly decided upon the style and type and several sheets had been struck off, on the excuse of some small alteration I had made on the proof he began all over again, and at the end of six months we were rather less advanced than on the first day. While these preparations were going on, I realized that the book was being produced in France as well as in Holland, and that he was printing two separate editions. What could I do? I had no longer control of my manuscript. Far from having taken a hand in the French edition, I had always been against it. But as, after all, it would be published whether I liked it or not, and was being used as a model for the other, I was obliged to glance over it and read the proofs, so as to avoid any mutilation or distortion of my work. Besides it was appearing with such direct approval from the censor that he was, in a way, directing the undertaking. He certainly wrote to me very frequently, and came to see me once about the matter, on an occasion which I shall soon describe.

While Duchesne was going ahead at a snail's pace, Néaulme, whom he was holding up, went forward even more slowly. The sheets were not sent to him regularly as they were printed. He thought that there was something dishonest about Duchesne's behaviour, or rather about Guy's – for Guy was his agent; and seeing that the agreement was not being kept to, he wrote me letter after letter full of complaints and grievances, which I could no more remedy than I could my own. His friend Guérin, who very often saw me at that time, talked to me incessantly about the book, but always with the greatest reserve. He knew and he did not know that it was being printed in France; he did and he did not know that the censor had a hand in the matter. Whilst sympathizing with me for the troubles the book was likely to cause me, he seemed to be accusing me of some imprudence, without ever caring to tell me exactly what it was. He incessantly talked and equivocated. He seemed only to talk in order to make me talk. My confidence at that time was so complete that I laughed at the circumspect and mysterious tone he assumed over the matter. I thought of it as a habit he had caught from the ministerial and legal offices he was always dealing with. Feeling sure that I had been absolutely correct over this book, and quite convinced that it had not only the censor's approval and protection but deserved and had obtained the favour of the ministry, I congratulated myself upon my courage

and virtue, and laughed at my timid friends, who seemed to be worried on my behalf. Duclos was one of them, and my trust in his uprightness and good sense should, I admit, have made me share his alarm if I had not counted so implicitly on the book's practical utility and on the honesty of its sponsors. He came to see me on behalf of M. Baille while *Émile* was in the press, and talked to me about it. I read him the 'Savoyard Vicar's Profession of Faith', to which he listened very quietly and, as I thought, with great pleasure. When I had finished he said to me, 'What, citizen, is this part of a book that is being printed in Paris?' 'Yes,' I replied, 'and it deserves to be printed at the Louvre, by order of the King.' 'I agree,' he answered, 'but be so kind as to tell nobody that you read me that piece.' The forcible manner in which he expressed himself surprised me, but did not frighten me. I knew that Duclos often saw M. de Malesherbes, and found it difficult to imagine how the two of them could hold such different opinions upon the same subject.

I had been living at Montmorency for more than four years without enjoying a single day's good health. Although the air there is excellent the water is bad; and that may very likely have been one of the causes that aggravated my habitual complaints. About the end of autumn in 1761 I fell seriously ill, and spent the whole winter in almost ceaseless pain. Numerous worries, in addition to my physical illness, made my sufferings even more unbearable. For some time I had been disturbed by vague and melancholy presentiments, I knew not of what. I received some rather strange anonymous letters, and even signed ones hardly less strange. One of them came from a councillor of the Paris courts, who was unhappy with the present state of the constitution, expected worse to follow, and wanted to consult me about some safe place in Geneva or Switzerland where he could retire with his family. I received another from M. de —, president of the High Court of —, who wanted me to draw up a memorial and remonstrance for that court, which was then on bad terms with the government, and offered to send me all the documents and materials I should require for the purpose. When I am in pain I am liable to be irritable. I was irritated when I received these letters, and I showed it in my replies, in which I flatly refused to do what was asked of me. It certainly is not my refusal that I regret, for the letters might have been snares set me by my enemies,* and what they asked of me was

* I knew, for instance, that the President of — was on very close terms with the Encyclopaedists and the d'Holbach circle.

contrary to principles that I was less willing to abandon than ever. But where I could have refused politely, I refused rudely; and that is where I was wrong.

The two letters I have just mentioned will be found amongst my papers. The one from the councillor did not altogether surprise me because, in common with him and many others, I thought that the weakening of the constitution threatened France with impending collapse. The disasters of an unsuccessful war,* which were all the fault of the government; the incredible disorder in the public finances; the perpetual disagreements in the administration, until then conducted by two or three ministers at open feud, who in injuring one another were ruining the whole Kingdom; the general discontent of the common people and of every other class; the stubbornness of an obstinate woman who always sacrificed her intelligence, if she had any, to her inclinations, and nearly always pushed the more capable out of office to make room for her favourites: everything combined to justify the councillor's prognostications, the public's, and my own. My forebodings several times made me uncertain whether I should not myself seek a refuge outside the Kingdom before the troubles broke out, as they seemed on the point of doing. But, reassured by my insignificance and my peaceful disposition, I believed that no storm would reach me in the retirement I planned for myself. My only regret was that, with things in that condition, M. de Luxembourg was undertaking commissions that were bound to lose him the affections of the province he governed. I could have wished that he would prepare a retreat for himself there against an emergency, in case the whole machine were to break down, as there seemed reason to fear it might, under present conditions. And it still appears to me beyond a doubt that if all the reins of government had not in the end fallen into a single pair of hands,† the French monarchy would now be in its death throes.

As my health became worse, the printing of *Émile* grew even slower, and I could not discover the reason. Guy did not condescend to write to me any more, or to answer my letters, nor could I get information from anyone, or find out anything about what was going on, M. de Malesherbes being temporarily away in the country. No misfortune of any kind ever troubles or depresses me so long as I know just what it is. But it is in my nature to fear the dark; I dread and loathe its black presence; mystery always disquiets me, it is too much

[* The Seven Years War.]

[† Those of the Duke de Choiseul.]

the opposite of my own character, which is open to the point of rashness. The sight of the most hideous monster would frighten me very little, I think. But if I were to catch sight of a figure in the night wrapped in a white sheet I should be afraid. So my imagination, set working by this long silence, began to raise me phantoms. The more anxious I was for the publication of my last and best work, the more tortured myself to find out what could be holding it up; and as I always carried everything to extremes I interpreted the delay in printing as a sign that the book was being suppressed. Being unable, however, to imagine the cause or the manner of its suppression, I remained in the cruellest state of suspense. I wrote letter after letter to Guy, to M. de Malesherbes, and to Mme de Luxembourg; and as no answers came, or none came when I expected them, I became completely upset. I was beside myself. Unfortunately I heard at this time that Father Griffet, a Jesuit, had been speaking about *Émile* and had even quoted some passages from it. Immediately my imagination was off like lightning, and unveiled the whole iniquitous mystery to me; I saw the march of events as clearly as if it had been revealed to me. I supposed that the Jesuits had been enraged by the contemptuous way in which I had spoken of their colleges, and had seized my work; that it was they who were holding up its publication; that having learnt from Guérin, who was their friend, of my present state of health, and foreseeing my speedy death – of which I was not myself in any doubt – they intended to delay publication until after that event, with the intention of cutting and altering the work, and of attributing to me, to serve their own ends, opinions different from my own. It is astounding what a host of facts and circumstances came into my head to reinforce this mad notion and give it the appearance of probability – or rather to provide me with both the evidence and proof. Guérin was completely in the Jesuits' hands, I knew. I attributed all the friendly advances he had made me to them; I convinced myself that it was at their instance that he had urged me to treat with Néaulme; that from this same Néaulme they had obtained the first sheets of my work; that they had then found a way of holding up the printing at Duchesne's, and perhaps of laying hands on my manuscript to work over it at their leisure until such time as my death should leave them free to publish their travesty of it. I had always felt, despite Father Berthier's smoothness, that the Jesuits disliked me, not only as an encyclopaedist but because my opinions were even more hostile to their principles and influence than my colleagues' unbelief. For

fanatical atheism and fanatical belief, having intolerance in common, can even unite, as they have done in China and as they do against me; whereas a reasonable and ethical religion which rejects all human control over the conscience, deprives wielders of that power of all their weapons. I knew that the Chancellor was also a firm friend of the Jesuits, and I was afraid that under pressure from his father the son might feel forced to hand them over the work he had protected. I believed, indeed, that I could already see the effect of his having done so in the chicanery that was being exercised against me over the first two volumes, for which they were requiring alterations in proof on trifling pretexts; while the two other volumes were, as well they knew, full of such outspoken passages that they would have to be completely reset if they were to be censored like the first two. I knew also, and M. de Malesherbes told me so himself, that the Abbé de Grave, whom he had entrusted with the supervision of this edition, was another member of the Jesuit party. I saw nothing but Jesuits everywhere, and did not reflect that on the eve of their destruction they were fully occupied with their own defence, and had something else to do besides bothering about the printing of a book that did not concern them. I am wrong in saying that I did *not reflect*; for I did consider the idea. It was one indeed that M. de Malesherbes took care to present to me as soon as he heard of my fantastic idea. But owing to another of those perversities to which a man is subject when he tries, from the depths of his retreat, to solve the mystery of great events about which he knows nothing, I refused to believe that the Jesuits were in danger, and considered the rumour that was circulating to that effect as a ruse on their part to lull their adversaries to sleep. Their past successes, which had been uninterrupted, gave me so monstrous an idea of their power that I was already lamenting the humiliation of the High Courts.* I knew that M. de Choiseul had been educated by them, that Mme de Pompadour was not on bad terms with them, and that their league with favourites and ministers had always seemed of advantage to both parties against their common enemies. The Court appeared to be neutral, and deciding that if the order were one day to receive a rude check the High Courts would never have the strength to give it to them, I construed this royal inaction as justifying their confidence and auguring their triumph. In short, seeing in all the rumours of the day nothing but artifice and snares on their part, and believing that in their security they had time

[* The Parlement.]

to deal with everything, I had no doubt that they would soon crush sensenism, the Courts of Law, the Encyclopaedists, and all who had not submitted to their yoke; and that if they allowed my book to appear, it would only be after having transformed it into a weapon for their own use, by using my name to deceive my readers.

I felt that I was dying. I can hardly conceive why my inflamed imagination did not kill me outright, so appalled was I by the thought that my memory would be dishonoured after my death in a work which was my best and worthiest. Never have I been so afraid of death. I believe that if I had died under those circumstances I should have died in utter despair. Even to-day, when I can see the most baleful and terrifying plot that has ever been hatched against a man's memory advancing unchecked towards its execution, I shall die a great deal more peacefully, in the certainty that I am leaving behind me in my writings a witness in my favour that will sooner or later triumph over the machinations of men.

1762 M. de Malesherbes saw my agitation. I confided in him, and by the efforts he made to calm me he proved the inexhaustible kindness of his heart. Mme de Luxembourg aided him in his good work, and several times called on Duchesne to find out how the edition was going ahead. At last printing was resumed and progressed more rapidly, but I never found out why it had been interrupted. M. de Malesherbes took the trouble to come to Montmorency to set my mind at rest, which he succeeded in doing. My perfect confidence in his honesty prevailed over the disturbance in my poor brain, and rendered his efforts to call me back to my senses effectual. Having seen me in so frenzied and anguished a state, he naturally felt that I was much to be pitied. He pitied me. He remembered the themes perpetually threshed over by the philosophical clique that surrounded him. When I went to live at the Hermitage they proclaimed, as I have already said, that it was out of obstinacy, out of pride, out of shame at the thought of giving up, but that I was bored to death and leading a most unhappy life. M. de Malesherbes believed them, and told me so in a letter. Pained that a man for whom I had so much respect should be so mistaken, I wrote him four consecutive letters explaining the real motives of my conduct, giving him a faithful description of my tastes, my inclinations, my character, and all the feelings of my heart. These four letters, written straight off, hurriedly,

without a rough copy, and left unrevised, are perhaps the only things I have written with facility in the whole of my life; which is most astonishing considering the pain I was in and my extreme depression at the time. Feeling my strength declining, I groaned at the thought of leaving so incorrect a picture of myself in the minds of honest men; and in the sketch hurriedly outlined in those four letters I attempted to provide some sort of substitute for the memoirs I had planned to write. These letters pleased M. Malesherbes, and he showed them around in Paris. They form, in a sense, a summary of what I am setting forth here in detail, and for that reason deserve to be preserved. Copies, which he had taken at my request, and which he sent me several years later, will be found among my papers.

The one thing that distressed me for the future, in the close expectation of death, was the want of a literary friend to whom I could entrust my papers to be sorted when I was gone. After my journey to Geneva I had become friendly with Moultau. I had a liking for the young man, and I could have wished him to come and close my eyes. I told him of my desire, and I believe that he would have performed that act of humanity for me with pleasure if his business and his family had permitted it. Deprived of this consolation, I wished at least to prove my trust in him by sending him the 'Vicar's Profession of Faith' before publication. It pleased him; but he did not seem from his reply to share the confidence with which at that time I awaited its reception. He asked me to send him some piece that no one else had. I sent him a 'Funeral Oration for the late Duke of Orleans', which I had written for the Abbé d'Arty but which he never read because, contrary to his expectation, he was not appointed to perform the ceremony.

Once the printing had been resumed it was continued and completed without incident; and I noticed one strange thing about it: that after all the strict alterations that had been required for the first two volumes the two last were passed without a word, nothing they contained being found unsuitable for publication. I still felt a certain uneasiness, however, that I cannot pass over in silence. Having formerly feared the Jesuits, I was now afraid of the Jansenists and the Philosophers. Having always been the enemy of everything that can be called party, faction, or cabal, I have never expected any good from members of any of them. The 'old women' had some time ago left their former abode and moved in so close to me that from their room they could hear everything that was said in mine and on my terrace;

and from their garden it was quite possible to climb the little wall separating it from my turret. I had made this turret my study, and so I had a table there piled with proofs and sheets of *Émile* and *The Social Contract*. These sheets I stitched together as I received them, and consequently had each volume there before it was published. My scatter-brained carelessness and my trust in M. Mathas, in whose garden my house stood, often made me forget to shut my turret at nights, and I would find it wide open in the mornings; which would not have worried me had I not seemed to notice some disturbance among my papers. After making this observation several times I became more careful to shut my door. The lock was a poor one, and the key only turned half way. Watching rather more carefully, I found that things had been more disturbed than when I had left the door open. Finally one of my volumes disappeared for a day and two nights, and I was unable to discover what had happened to it till the morning of the third day, when I found it once more on my table. I had not, and never had had, any suspicions of M. Mathas, or of his nephew, M. Dumoulin; for I knew that they were both fond of me, and completely trusted them. But I began to be suspicious of the 'old women'. I knew that, although Jansenists, they had some connexion with d'Alembert and lodged in his house. This made me rather uneasy and a good deal more observant. I removed my papers to my room, and altogether gave up seeing them, since I had also heard that they had displayed the first volume of *Émile*, which I had been foolish enough to lend them, in several houses in Paris. Although they continued to be my neighbours till my departure, I never had any further communication with them after that.

The Social Contract appeared a month or two before *Émile*. I had made Rey promise that he would never try to smuggle any of my books into France, and he applied to the censor's office for permission to bring it in by way of Rouen, to which port he sent his consignments by sea. He obtained no reply, and his parcels remained at Rouen for several months, at the end of which time they were returned to him, after some attempt had been made to confiscate them; but he had made such an outcry that he received them back. A few interested persons obtained copies from Amsterdam, which circulated without making much stir. Mauléon, who had heard and even seen something of this, spoke to me with an air of mystery that surprised me, and might have alarmed me if I had not felt certain that all my actions had been correct and that I had nothing to reproach myself

with. So, trusting in my great principle, I felt reassured. I had no doubt too that M. de Choiseul, who had already been well disposed towards me and appreciated the praise which my admiration had led me to give him in the book, would support me on this occasion against Mme de Pompadour's malevolence.

I had assuredly as much right as ever to count on the kindness of M. de Luxembourg, and on his support at need; for never had he given me more frequent or more touching marks of friendship. My ill-health not permitting me to visit the Château on their Easter visit, he came to see me every single day; and when he saw that I was in continuous distress he at last prevailed on me to see Brother Côme, whom he sent for and brought to me. Moreover, with a courage indeed rare, and most meritorious in a great nobleman, he stayed with me during the operation, which was both long and painful. It was only a question of being probed, but I had never been able to stand it even at the hands of Morand, who made several attempts but always without success. Brother Côme, who had rare skill and lightness of touch, finally succeeded in introducing a very small probe, after giving me two hours of suffering during which I forcibly smothered my groans in order to spare the tender-hearted Marshal's feelings. At his first examination, Brother Côme thought that he had found a large stone, and said so; but the second time he could not find it. After conducting a second and third examination with a scrupulous care that made the time seem very long, he declared that there was no stone, but that the prostate gland was scirrhus and abnormally swollen. He found my bladder large and in a good state, and ended by saying that I should suffer a great deal but live a long time. If his second prediction proves as true as his first, my ills are nowhere near their end.

Thus after having been successively treated over so many years for diseases which I had not got, I was finally informed that my complaint was incurable although not mortal, and would last for the rest of my days. My imagination was restrained by this information and no longer showed me the prospect of a cruel death in the agonies of stone. I ceased to fear that the end of a catheter, which had broken in my urethra a long time ago, had formed the nodule of a stone. Delivered from imaginary ills crueller than my real ones, I endured the latter more patiently. Certainly since that time I have suffered much less from my malady than I had done before; and when I recall that I owe this relief to M. de Luxembourg it is always with a fresh feeling of affection for his memory.

Restored to life, so to speak, and more than ever occupied with my plan for passing what remained of my days in retirement, I was only waiting for the publication of *Émile* to put it into effect. I was thinking of Touraine, which I had once visited and which pleased me for the gentleness both of its climate and its inhabitants.

La terra molle e lieta e diletta
Simili a se gli abitatori produce.*

I had already spoken of my plan to M. de Luxembourg, who had tried to deflect me from it. I spoke to him of it again, as if of something already settled. Then he offered me the Château de Merlou, about forty-five miles from Paris, as a place of retirement which might suit me, and one in which he and Mme de Luxembourg would be delighted to see me settled. His offer touched me, and did not displease me. First of all it was necessary to see the place, and we fixed a day when he should send his valet with a carriage to take me there. On that day I felt very unwell, the expedition had to be put off, and the disturbances which followed prevented its ever taking place. Having since learnt that the Merlou estate did not belong to the Marshal but to Madame, I found it less difficult to reconcile myself to not having gone there.

Émile finally appeared, without any more talk of fresh proofs, and with no other difficulties. Before its publication M. de Luxembourg asked me for all M. de Malesherbes's letters concerning it. My complete trust in them both, and my feeling of absolute security, prevented my seeing how extraordinary, not to say disquieting, this request was. I handed over the letters, all but one or two which, by an oversight, I had left in some books. Some time before, M. de Malesherbes had advised me that he would get back the letters I had written to Duchesne during my Jesuit scare; and I must confess that they did not speak very well for my intelligence. But I replied that I did not want to appear any better than I was, and that he could leave Duchesne the letters. I do not know what he did.

The publication of *Émile* was not greeted with the burst of applause which had followed that of my previous works. No book ever had such praise from private individuals and so little public approbation. The opinions I received in letters and by word of mouth from those most capable of judging confirmed my own belief that it was the best

* The country gentle, pleasant, and delightful produces inhabitants like itself (Tasso).

and most important of all my writings. But everything that was said, was said with the strangest precautions, as if there had been some reason for keeping any admiration for me secret. Mme de Boufflers, who declared that the author of the book deserved statues and universal homage, quite baldly begged me at the end of her note to send it back to her. D'Alembert, who wrote that this work was a proof of my superior powers and should place me first among men of letters, left his letter unsigned, although he had signed every one that he had written to me before. Duclos, a sure friend and an upright but cautious man, who thought highly of the book, avoided putting anything in writing; La Condamine fell on the 'Profession of Faith' and wandered from the point; Clairaut, in his letter, confined himself to the same subject, but he was not afraid to express the emotions he had felt on reading it, and soundly informed me that the book had warmed his old heart. Of all those to whom I had sent it he was the only one who said freely and boldly to all the world just how good he thought it.

Mathas, to whom I had also given a copy before it was on sale, lent it to M. de Blaire, Councillor to the Courts and father of the Intendant of Strasburg. M. de Blaire had a country house at Saint-Gratien, where Mathas, an old acquaintance of his, sometimes went to see him, when he could. My landlord made him read *Émile* before it appeared; and when he gave it back M. de Blaire made this remark which was repeated to me on the same day: 'M. Mathas, that is a very fine book. But it will soon be rather more discussed than the author will like.' When he repeated this to me I only laughed, seeing in it no more than some legal pomposity, for lawyers make a mystery out of everything. None of the disquieting opinions which were repeated to me affected me any more seriously. Far from in any way foreseeing the catastrophe impending, I was convinced of the beauty and merit of my work, and certain that my conduct was completely in order. So relying, as I believed I had a right to, on Mme de Luxembourg's influence, and on some ministerial favour, I congratulated myself on the resolution I had made to retire in the midst of my triumphs, when I had just crushed all those who were envious of me.

Only one thing alarmed me about the publication of the book, and that not so much out of consideration for my safety as out of obligation to men who had shown me kindness. At the Hermitage and at Montmorency I had had a close view of the vexations suffered by the unhappy peasantry owing to the jealous care taken to preserve the

pleasures of the great. This had aroused my indignation, for the poor creatures are forced to put up with the damage caused to their fields by wild animals, and do not dare to protect themselves by any means other than scaring them off. They are compelled, therefore, to spend the nights among their beans and peas, beating kettles, drums, and bells to keep the wild-boar away. Having witnessed the barbarous severity with which the Count de Charolais treated his unfortunate peasants, I had made an attack on this form of cruelty towards the end of *Émile*; another infraction of my principles which did not go unpunished. I learned that the Prince de Conti's servants were hardly less severe with the people on his estates, and I trembled for fear that this prince, towards whom I felt deep respect and gratitude, should take what a feeling of outraged humanity had made me say about his uncle as applying to himself, and be offended by it. However, as my conscience fully acquitted me on this score I allowed its voice to reassure me, and I was justified in doing so. At least I have never heard that this great prince paid the slightest attention to the passage, which was written a long time before I had the honour of his acquaintance.

A few days before or after the book's publication – I do not remember the time exactly – there appeared another work on the same subject, taken word for word from my first volume. This book bore the name of a Genevese called Balexsert, and the title page stated that it had gained the prize from the Academy of Haarlem. It was not hard to realize that the Academy and the prize were very recent creations intended to conceal this plagiarism from the public eye. But I also saw that there must have been some prior intriguing, which I did not understand, involving either the lending of my manuscript, without which this piracy could not have taken place, or the establishment of this alleged prize, which had to be endowed with some factual basis. It was not till many years afterwards, that a word dropped by d'Ivernois allowed me to penetrate the mystery and catch a glimpse of the men who had been behind Balexsert.

The dull murmurings that precede the storm were beginning to make themselves heard, and everybody with any perspicacity saw that there was some plot brewing involving my book and myself, and that it would soon break. As for me, my confidence and stupidity were such that, far from foreseeing my misfortune, I did not even suspect its cause even after I had felt its effects. They began by skilfully circulating the idea that whilst severe measures were being taken

against the Jesuits no favouritism ought to be shown towards books and authors that attacked religion. I was reproached for having put my name to *Émile*, as if I had not done so to all my other writings, which had not been objected to. They pretended to fear that they might find themselves forced to take certain steps, which they would regret, but which circumstances rendered necessary, and which would be the result of my own imprudence. These rumours reached my ears, but hardly disturbed me at all. It did not even occur to me that there could be anything about the whole affair that affected me personally, since I felt myself to be so absolutely beyond reproach, to have such excellent backing, and to have conformed to every requirement in every way. Besides, I had no fear that Mme de Luxembourg would leave me in the lurch for a fault which, if it had been committed, was entirely her responsibility. But knowing the usual procedure in these cases, and that it is customary to come down on the publisher and spare the author, I was not a little concerned for poor Duchesne, if M. de Malesherbes should abandon him.

I remained unworried. Rumours increased, and soon their burden changed. The public, and the Courts in particular, seemed to be irritated by my calmness. At the end of a few days the excitement became terrific, the threats took another direction, and I became their object. Magistrates were heard to say quite openly that burning books did no good; what needed burning was the author. Nothing was said about the publishers. The first time that these remarks – worthier of a Goanese inquisitor than of the member of a Senate – reached my ears, I thought that they were an invention of the Holbach clique intended to frighten me and drive me out of the country. I laughed at their childish ruse, and told myself as I did so that if they had known the true state of things they would have looked for some other way of frightening me. But the rumour became so loud that it was clearly serious. M. and Mme de Luxembourg had put forward their second visit to Montmorency that year, and so were there at the beginning of June. I heard very little here about my new books, although they were creating a stir in Paris, and the master and mistress of the house did not mention them at all. One morning, however, when I was alone with M. de Luxembourg, he asked me: 'Have you criticized M. de Choiseul in your *Social Contract*?' 'I!' I answered, starting back in surprise. 'No, I promise you. Far from it. Though my pen is not given to adulation, I have written him the most splendid eulogy that a minister has ever received.' And I immediately quoted the passage

to him. 'And in *Émile*?' he resumed. 'Not a word,' I answered. 'There is not a single word about him.' 'Ah,' he said, with more than his usual vivacity. 'You ought to have done the same in that book too, or have made yourself clearer.' 'I thought I was clear,' I answered. 'I esteemed him highly enough.' He was about to speak again. I saw the words rise to his lips, but he checked himself and was silent. What an evil is courtly diplomacy when it gets the better of friendship itself even in the kindest of hearts!

This conversation, short though it was, enlightened me, to some extent at least, on my situation. It made me realize that it was really me they were after. I deplored my unprecedented ill-luck which turned all the good I said or did to my disadvantage. However, feeling that this time I had Mme de Luxembourg and M. de Malesherbes to protect me, I did not see how it would be possible for my enemies to push them aside and reach me. On the other hand I was quite conscious from that moment that it would no longer be a question of right and justice, and that no one would bother to discover whether I was really in the wrong or not. Meanwhile the storm rolled louder and louder. Even Néaulme himself, in his prolix chatter, betrayed his regret at having had anything to do with the work, and his apparent uncertainty of the fate awaiting the book and its author. One thing, however, still reassured me. Mme de Luxembourg appeared so calm, so happy and gay, that she must have known exactly what she was doing since she was not in the least disturbed on my behalf, did not utter a single word of sympathy or excuse, and saw the turn that the affair seemed likely to take as coolly as if it had nothing to do with her, and as if she had never taken the least interest in me. What surprised me was that she said nothing to me whatever. I thought that she ought at least to have said something. Mme de Boufflers appeared less calm. She went about with a perturbed air, displaying a great deal of activity and assuring me that the Prince de Conti was also taking active measures to ward off the blow which was being prepared for me, and which she still attributed to the present situation, which made it important for the Courts to avoid any accusation from the Jesuits of indifference to religion. She seemed, however, to have little confidence in the Prince's efforts or her own. All her conversation, which was alarming rather than reassuring, tended towards persuading me to retire, and she constantly advised me to go to England where she offered to introduce me to several friends, among them the celebrated Hume, whom she had known for a long while. Seeing that I still

remained unperturbed, she took a line more likely to shake me. She explained to me that if I were arrested and interrogated I should be compelled to mention Mme de Luxembourg, and that out of gratitude for her friendship I ought not to expose myself to any risk of compromising her. I replied that she could be confident that under such circumstances I should never compromise Madame. She answered that such a resolution was more easily made than carried out. And there she was right, especially in my case, since I was quite determined never to perjure myself or to lie to the judges, however dangerous it might be to speak the truth.

Seeing that although this reflection had made some impression on me I still could not make up my mind to fly the country, she suggested a few weeks in the Bastille, as a means of removing myself from the jurisdiction of the Paris courts, which cannot touch State prisoners. I made no objection to this singular favour, provided that it was not petitioned for in my name. As she did not mention it again, I subsequently concluded that she had only made the suggestion to test me, and that no one welcomed an expedient that would put an end to the whole matter.

A few days later the Marshal received a letter from the Vicar of Deuil, a friend of Grimm's and of Mme d'Épinay's, containing the information, which he claimed to have got from a reliable source, that the Paris courts intended to prosecute me with the utmost severity, and that on a certain day, which he indicated, a warrant would be issued for my arrest. I considered this news a Holbachian fiction. I knew that the Courts were very particular about procedure, and that it would be against all the rules to start on this occasion with a warrant for arrest, before judicially ascertaining whether I confessed to the book, and if I were really its author. 'Only in crimes that endanger the public safety', I several times told Mme de Boufflers, 'are warrants issued against the accused upon a simple information, out of fear that they may escape punishment. But when they wish to punish an offence like mine – which is really deserving of honour and rewards – they proceed against the book and, as far as they can, avoid attacking the author.' She pointed out some subtle distinction, which I have forgotten, to prove that it would be a favour to me if they issued a warrant instead of summoning me to a hearing. The next day I received a letter from Guy who informed me that, having been that day at the Chief Prosecutor's, he had seen on his desk the rough draft of a summons against *Émile* and its author. Remember that this Guy

was the partner of Duchesne, who had printed the work; and note that he was not in the least perturbed on his own account, but merely gave the author this warning out of charity. Of course the whole business seemed to me incredible. It was so simple, so natural that a publisher, when granted an audience with a magistrate, should quietly read the drafts and manuscripts scattered about that dignitary's desk! But Mme de Boufflers and others confirmed his story. The absurdities that were incessantly drummed into my ears tempted me to believe that everyone had gone mad.

Quite conscious that there was some mystery behind all this that no one would tell me, I waited quietly for the issue, relying on my correctness and innocence in the whole matter, and only too happy, whatever persecution I might undergo, to suffer for the cause of truth. Far from being afraid and staying in hiding, I went every day to the château, and took my ordinary walk in the afternoons. On 8 June, the day before the warrant, I took it in the company of two Oratorian professors, Father Alamanni and Father Mandard. We carried a picnic with us to Champeaux, which we heartily enjoyed. We had forgotten to bring glasses, and used rye stalks instead through which we sucked the wine from the bottle, taking care to pick really thick stalks to see who could suck the hardest. Never in my life have I been so gay.

I have related how I suffered from insomnia in my youth. Since that time I had had the habit of reading in bed every night until I felt my lids grow heavy. Then I would put out my candle, and try to doze for a few minutes, which were never long. My usual night reading was the Bible, and I have read it right through five or six times on end in this way. Finding myself more wakeful than usual that evening, I continued my reading even longer, till I had read the whole book which ends with the Levite of Ephraim – it is the Book of Judges, if I am not mistaken, for I have never looked at it since then. The story greatly moved me and I was pondering over it in a sort of dream when suddenly I was aroused by a noise and a light, which was carried by Thérèse and shone upon M. La Roche, who said, as he saw me start up in my bed: 'Do not be alarmed. I have come from Mme de Luxembourg with a letter from her and one from the Prince de Conti.' Inside Mme de Luxembourg's letter I found another which the Prince had just sent her by a special messenger with the news that, despite all his efforts, they were determined to proceed against me with all severity. 'The excitement', he wrote, 'is very high. Nothing

can avert the blow. The Court demand it, the magistrates desire it. At seven o'clock tomorrow morning the warrant will go out, and they will send immediately to arrest him. I have obtained an assurance that if he makes his escape he will not be pursued; but if he persists in courting arrest, he will be arrested.' La Roche implored me, in Mme de Luxembourg's name, to get up and go to consult with her. It was two in the morning, and she had just gone to bed. 'She is waiting for you,' he added, 'and will not go to sleep until she has seen you.' I hurriedly dressed, and hastened to her.

She seemed upset. I had never seen her in that state before. Her anxiety touched me. At this moment of surprise, in the middle of the night, I was not free from emotion myself. But when I saw her I ceased to think of myself and thought only of her, and of the sad part she would play if I allowed myself to be caught. For though I felt possessed of sufficient courage to tell nothing but the truth, even if it should injure or ruin me, I did not credit myself with enough presence of mind, or adroitness, or even perhaps with enough firmness, to avoid compromising her, if I were hard pressed. This decided me to sacrifice my reputation to her peace of mind and to do for her, on this occasion, what nothing would have induced me to do for myself. The moment I came to my decision I informed her of it, having no wish to spoil the value of my sacrifice by selling it at a price. I am certain that she could not have mistaken my motive. But she did not say a word to show that she was grateful, and I was so shocked by her indifference that I even considered changing my mind. But the Marshal came on the scene, and some minutes later Mme de Bouffiers arrived from Paris. They did what Mme de Luxembourg should have done. I allowed myself to be flattered. I was ashamed to draw back, and all that remained to be decided was the place of my retreat and the time of my departure. M. de Luxembourg proposed that I should stay for some days with him incognito, so that I should have more leisure to deliberate and make my plans; I refused, and I also refused the proposal that I should go secretly to the Temple. I insisted on leaving that very day, rather than remain in hiding anywhere.

Conscious that I had secret and powerful enemies in the Kingdom, I considered that despite my love for France, if I wished to live at peace I must depart. My first impulse was to retire to Geneva, but an instant's reflection was enough to dissuade me from doing anything so stupid. I knew that the French ministry had even more power in Geneva than in Paris, and would no more leave me in peace in one

place than the other if they had decided to persecute me. I knew that my *Discourse on Inequality* had excited a hatred for me on the Council, the more dangerous because no one dared to express it. Lastly I knew that when the *New Héloïse* appeared they had hurriedly banned it at the request of Doctor Tronchin. But seeing that nobody was following their example, even in Paris, they became ashamed of their foolishness and withdrew their prohibition. I had no doubt that they would find the present opportunity more favourable, and do their best to profit by it. Notwithstanding outward appearances, I knew that in every Genevese heart there lurked a secret jealousy, only waiting for the chance to be assuaged. Nevertheless patriotism called me back to my own country, and if I had been able to convince myself that I could live there in peace I should not have hesitated. But neither honour nor reason allowed me to seek refuge there as a fugitive; and I decided to retire to a nearby place and wait in Switzerland until I saw what course they would take about me in Geneva. It will soon be seen that I was not left in doubt for long.

Mme de Boufflers strongly disapproved of this decision, and made fresh endeavours to persuade me to go to England. I remained unshaken. I have never liked England or the English; and all Mme de Boufflers' eloquence, far from overcoming my repugnance, served for some reason to increase it.

Having decided to leave that day, I was by morning in everyone's eyes as good as gone; and La Roche, whom I sent to fetch my papers, refused to tell Thérèse herself whether I had departed or not. Since I had decided one day to write my memoirs I had accumulated a lot of letters and other papers; and it cost him several journeys. One section of these papers, which had already been sorted, I put on one side, and occupied myself for the rest of the morning in sorting the others, intending only to take what would be useful to me and to burn the rest. M. de Luxembourg was so kind as to help me in this task, which was so long that we could not finish it in the morning, and I had no time to burn anything. The Marshal offered to deal with the rest of the sorting, to burn the rubbish himself with his own hands, and to send me everything that he put aside. I accepted his offer, very glad to be relieved of the task, and to be free to spend the few hours remaining with those dear friends from whom I was about to part for ever. He took the key of the room where I kept my papers and, at my urgent request, sent for my poor 'aunt', who was consumed with the most cruel anxiety as to my fate, and as to what would become of her,

and was momentarily expecting the officers of the law, without any idea of how to behave to them or how she should answer them. La Roche said nothing to her, but brought her to the Château. She thought that I was already far away. When she saw me she gave a piercing cry, and threw herself into my arms. O friendship, union of hearts and habits, dearest intimacy! In this sweet and cruel moment were concentrated so many days of happiness, tenderness, and peace spent together, and it was with deep pain that I felt the wrench of our first separation when we had rarely been out of one another's sight for a single day in almost seventeen years. The Marshal, who witnessed our embrace, could not restrain his tears and withdrew. Thérèse did not want to leave me. I explained to her how difficult it would be for her to follow me at that moment, and the necessity for her remaining behind to sell my possessions and collect my money. When a warrant is issued for a man's arrest it is usual to seize his papers, put a seal on his possessions or make an inventory of them, and appoint a trustee. It was very necessary that she should stay behind to observe what might happen, and do the best for me she could. I promised her that she should rejoin me very soon, and the Marshal confirmed my promise. But I refused to tell her where I was going, so that if she were questioned by those coming to arrest me she could truthfully protest her ignorance on that score. When I embraced her at the moment of parting I felt a most extraordinary stirring within me, and said to her in a burst of emotion that was, alas, prophetic: 'My dear, you must arm yourself with courage. You have shared the good days of my prosperity. It now remains for you, since you wish it, to share my miseries. Expect nothing but insults and disasters henceforth. The fate that begins for me on this unhappy day will pursue me till my last hour.'

There was nothing left but to think of departure. The officers of the law should have come at ten o'clock. It was four in the afternoon when I left, and they had not yet arrived. It had been settled that I should travel by the post. I had no carriage. The Marshal, however, gave me a cabriolet as a present, and lent me horses and a postillion as far as the first stage where, thanks to the arrangements he had made, they found no difficulty in giving me fresh horses.

As I had not dined at table and had not shown myself in the Château, the ladies came to say good-bye to me in the first-floor room where I had spent the day. Mme de Luxembourg embraced me several times with an expression of some sadness. But I did not feel in her embraces

the warmth she had put into them two or three years before. Mme de Boufflers embraced me also, and said some very nice things. Mme de Mirepoix, who was also there, embraced me too, which I found more surprising. For she is an extremely cold person, formal and reserved, and never seems to me quite free from that haughtiness characteristic of the House of Lorraine. She had never shown me much attention. Whether I was flattered by this unexpected honour and inclined to attach too much importance to it, or whether she really did put into her embrace a little of that pity that is natural in a generous heart, I found in her look and her gesture a certain intensity of feeling which touched me deeply. Looking back on it, I have often suspected since that she was not unaware of the lot to which I was condemned, and could not resist a momentary feeling of sympathy for my fate.

The Marshal did not open his mouth; he was as pale as death. He insisted on accompanying me to my carriage, which was waiting for me at the watering-place. We walked right across the garden without saying a word. I had a key to the park and used it to open the gate. Then, instead of putting it back in my pocket, I silently handed it to him. He took it with a surprising promptness, which I have not been able to refrain from often remembering since then. I have seldom experienced a more bitter moment in all my life than that of our parting. Our embrace was long and silent; we both felt that this was our last good-bye.

Between La Barre and Montmorency I passed four men in black in a hired coach who saluted me with smiles. From the description which Thérèse afterwards gave me of the officers' appearance, the hour of their arrival and their way of behaviour, I have never been in any doubt that it was they; especially since I subsequently learnt that instead of the warrant being issued at seven o'clock, as I had been told, I had not been ready till midday. I had to go right through Paris. There is not much concealment in an open carriage. I saw several people in the streets who greeted me as if they knew me, but I did not recognize any of them. That same evening I turned aside to pass through Villeroy. At Lyons post passengers have to go before the commandant. This might have been embarrassing for a man who did not want to lie or give a false name. I went with a letter from M. de Luxembourg to beg M. de Villeroy to get me exempted from this obligation. M. de Villeroy gave me a letter, which I did not use because I did not pass through Lyons. It is still among my papers with

its seal unbroken. The Duke pressed me to sleep at Villeroy; but I preferred to resume my journey, and travelled two more stages that day.

My carriage was uncomfortable, and I was too unwell to travel far in a day. Moreover, my appearance was not sufficiently impressive to get me good service; and, as is well known, in France post-horses only feel the whip by favour of the postillion. By paying these gentlemen handsomely I hoped to make good what was lacking in my speech and appearance. That made things worse. They took me for a poor creature travelling on somebody's errand and using the post for the first time in his life. After that I got nothing but poor horses, and became a joke to the postillions. I ended as I ought to have begun, by being patient, saying nothing, and letting them have their way.

I surrendered to the reflections which came to me on the subject of all that had just happened; and that was enough to save me from boredom on the road. But this did not suit my state of mind or my heart's inclinations. It is astonishing how easily I forget past ills, however recent they may be. When they lie in the future, anticipation disturbs and alarms me. But the memory of them comes back to me only dimly, and it no sooner comes than it fades. My cruel imagination, which ceaselessly torments itself by foreseeing evils before they arise, interferes with my memory and prevents my recalling them once they are past. No more precautions can be taken against what has happened, and it is useless to worry about it. In a way I exhaust my misfortunes in advance. The more I suffer in anticipation, the easier I find it to forget. Whereas, on the other hand, I am continuously preoccupied with my past happiness. I remember it and chew it over, so to speak, in such a way that I can enjoy it afresh at will. It is this happy characteristic, I believe, that I have to thank for never having known that vindictive feeling which is kept boiling in a resentful heart by the continual memory of insults received, and which inflicts upon itself all the tortures that it longs to inflict on its enemy. Being excitable by nature, I have felt angry, even enraged on the spur of the moment, but never has the desire for revenge taken root within me. I am too little concerned by the insult to worry much about the insulter. I only think of the hurt I have received from him because of the further hurt he may yet do me; and if I were sure that he would harm me no more, the harm he had done me would immediately be forgotten. Forgiveness of offences is constantly preached to us; and it is no doubt a beautiful virtue, but it does not apply to me. I

to not know whether my heart could subdue its hatred, for it has never felt any; and I think too little about my enemies to claim the merit of forgiving them. I will not say how cruelly they torment themselves in order to torment me. I am at their mercy; they have absolute power, and they use it. There is only one thing beyond their reach, and that I defy them to attain; it is, by tormenting themselves about me to make me torment myself about them.

The day after my departure I so completely forgot all that had just happened—the Courts, Mme de Pompadour, M. de Choiseul, Grimm, and d'Alembert, their plots and their accomplices, that I should never have given them another thought during my whole journey if it had not been for the precautions I was obliged to observe. One memory which came to me in place of all these was that of the book I had been reading on the night before my departure. I also remembered Gessner's* *Idylls*, which his translator Hubert had sent me some time before. These two ideas took so strong a hold on me and became so blended in my mind that I decided to combine them by treating the theme of the Levite of Ephraim in the manner of Gessner. His simple and pastoral style scarcely seemed suitable for so grim a subject, and it was hardly to be supposed that my situation at the time furnished me with such cheerful ideas as might enliven it. I made the attempt, however, simply to amuse myself in my carriage and without any hope of success. The moment I began it I was astonished at the pleasant flow of my ideas and the facility I found in expressing them. In three days I wrote the first three cantos of this little poem, which I afterwards finished at Motiers; and I am sure that never in my life have I written anything in which there is a more touching sweetness, fresher colouring, more artless descriptions, more exact delineation, or a more classical simplicity in every respect – and that despite the horrible nature of the subject, which is fundamentally abhorrent; that over and above the poem's other merits I can take credit for having overcome a real difficulty. If the *Levite of Ephraim* is not the best of my works it will always be my dearest. I have never read it through, and I never shall, without feeling within me the plaudits of the heart without gall which, far from being embittered by its misfortunes, finds consolation for them and the means of compensation, both within itself. If all those great philosophers were to be brought together who, in their books, are so superior to the adversities they have never sustained; and if they were then put into a position like

[* Salomon Gessner, Swiss poet and landscape painter (1730–88).]

mine and, in the first violence of their outraged honour, given just such a task to perform, we should soon see what they would make of it.

When I left Montmorency for Switzerland I made up my mind to stop at Yverdun with my dear old friend, M. Roguin, who had retired there some years before, and had already invited me to go and see him there. I learned on the road that Lyons would be out of my way, and this prevented my passing through it. But it was necessary to go through Besançon instead, a fortified city, and consequently subject to the same restrictions. I decided therefore to turn left and travel through Salins, on the pretext of going to see M. de Mairan, M. Dupin's nephew, who had a post in the salt works and who had often in the past invited me to pay him a visit. The expedient worked; I did not find M. de Mairan at home; and delighted at avoiding the delay, I continued on my way without exchanging a word with anybody.

On entering the territory of Berne I called a halt, got down, flung myself on the ground, and kissed and embraced it, crying in delight: 'Heaven, the protector of virtue be praised. I am setting foot in a land of liberty.' Thus, trusting blindly in my hopes, I have always passionately loved what was fated to bring misfortune upon me. My astounded postillion thought that I was mad. I climbed back into my carriage and a few hours afterwards, to my pure and deep delight, I felt myself clasped in the arms of the excellent Roguin. Here I have need to summon fresh strength and courage, for I shall soon be in need of both.

It is not for no purpose that I have dilated, in the tale I have just told, on all the circumstances which I have been able to recall. Although they do not seem very enlightening in themselves, once one seizes the thread of the plot they will shed light on its development; and although they do not isolate the essentials of the problem I am going to outline, they offer considerable help in solving it.

If we suppose that my removal was absolutely necessary for the execution of the conspiracy against me, for it to be successful everything had to happen much as it did. But if, instead of letting myself be frightened by Mme de Luxembourg's nocturnal ambassador and disturbed by his warnings, I had continued to hold out as I had begun, and if, instead of remaining at the Château, I had returned to sleep quietly in my bed till morning, would the warrant have been put into execution just the same? A big question upon which depends the solution of many others; and as we examine it there is some point in noting

the hour at which the warrant was to have been issued according to any warning, and the hour at which it really was issued. A crude but impressive example of the importance of minor details when setting out the facts, if one is looking for their secret causes in order by induction to explain these facts in their entirety.

BOOK TWELVE

1762 Here begins the work of darkness in which I have been entombed for eight years past, without ever having been able, try as I might, to pierce its hideous obscurity. In the abyss of evil in which I am sunk I feel the weight of blows struck at me; I perceive the immediate instrument; but I can neither see the hand which directs it nor the means by which it works. Disgrace and misfortune fall upon me as if of themselves and unseen. When my grief-stricken heart utters groans, I seem like a man complaining for no reason. The authors of my ruin have discovered the unimaginable art of turning the public into the unsuspecting accomplice of their plot, who does not even see its results. In relating, therefore, the events that concern me, the treatment I have suffered and all that has happened to me, I am in no position to trace them to their prime mover or to assume reasons when I state facts. These first causes are all noted down in the three previous books; every interest that was bound up with me and every secret motive is there exposed. But to explain how these various causes combined to bring about the strange events of my life, this I find it impossible to do, even conjecturally. If there are any among my readers generous enough to try and probe these mysteries till they discover the truth, let them carefully re-read the last three books. Then let them apply the information in their possession to each fact that is set down in the book which follows, and go back from intrigue to intrigue and from agent to agent till they come to the prime movers of it all. I am absolutely certain what the result of their researches will be, but I lose myself in the obscure and tortuous windings of the tunnels which lead to it.

During my stay at Yverdun I made the acquaintance of all M. Roguin's family, amongst others of his niece Mme Boy de La Tour and her daughters, whose father, as I think I have already said, I had once known at Lyons. She had come to Yverdun to see her uncle and sisters; and her eldest daughter, who was about fifteen, delighted me by her good sense and her splendid character. I became extremely fond of both mother and daughter. The daughter was intended by M. Roguin for his nephew the Colonel, who was already elderly, and who also displayed the greatest affection for me. But although the

uncle was wildly in favour of the marriage and the nephew also strongly desired it, and although I was extremely anxious for the happiness of them both, the great disparity of age and the young lady's extreme repugnance to the match made me help the mother to get it out off; and in fact it did not take place. The Colonel afterwards married Mlle Dillan, a relative of his, a lady whose character and beauty were after my own heart and who made him the happiest of husbands and fathers. For all that, M. Roguin has not been able to forget that I opposed his wishes on that occasion. But I am consoled by the assurance that I fulfilled the most sacred duty of friendship towards him and towards his family; and that does not consist in always making oneself pleasant, but in always offering the best advice. I was not long in doubt as to the welcome awaiting me in Geneva, in case I should ever wish to return. My book was burnt there, and a warrant was issued against me on 18 June, that is to say nine days after the issue of the Paris warrant. So much incredible nonsense was packed into this second warrant which quite deliberately violated the ecclesiastical edict, that I refused to believe the first news of it that reached me. But when every absurdity was fully confirmed, I trembled with fear lest so manifest and blatant an infraction of every law, starting with that of common sense, should turn Geneva upside down. I need not have worried; everything remained quiet. If there was any outcry among the people it was against me; and I was openly treated by every female gossip and every little schoolmaster like a schoolboy threatened with a whipping for making mistakes in his catechism.

These two warrants were the signal for the cry of execration which went up against me throughout Europe, a cry of unparalleled fury. All the newspapers, periodicals, and pamphlets sounded a terrible alarm. The French especially – that mild, polite, generous people that prides itself on its good-breeding and its respect for the unfortunate – suddenly forgot their favourite virtues and distinguished themselves by the number and violence of the insults which they seemed to vie with one another in piling upon me. I was an infidel, an atheist, a lunatic, a madman, a wild beast, a wolf. The new editor of the *Journal de Trévoux** made a digression on the subject of my wolfishness which amply proved his own. In fact it might have been thought that people in Paris were afraid of police prosecution if when writing on any subject whatever they failed to slip in some insult against myself. As I sought in vain for the cause of this unanimous hostility, I

[* A Jesuit newspaper.]

almost believed that the whole world had gone mad. Could the writer of *Perpetual Peace* be a spreader of discord, the creator of the Savoyard Vicar be an infidel, the author of the *New Héloïse* a wolf, and that of *Émile* a madman! What should I have been then, in heaven's name, if I had written *The Spirit of the Laws*,* or something of that kind? Yet in the storm that rose against the author of Montesquieu's book the public, far from joining its voice with that of the persecutors, avenged him upon them by its praise. Compare his book and mine, the different receptions they received, the treatment meted out to the two authors in the various states of Europe, and find any reasons for this contrast that would satisfy a sane man. That is all I ask. I will say no more.

I found my stay at Yverdon so pleasant that the warm entreaties of M. Roguin and his family persuaded me to remain there. M. de Moiry de Gingins, the town magistrate, also encouraged me by his kindness to stay under his jurisdiction. The Colonel too urged me so forcibly to accept rooms in a small pavilion adjoining his house between the courtyard and the garden, that I consented; whereupon he hurriedly furnished and supplied it with all that was necessary for my little household. And Roguin, the banneret,† also, who was the most attentive of them all, never left me all day long. Though I was very grateful for all these kindnesses I sometimes found them rather tiresome. The day of my moving in was already fixed, and I had written to Thérèse to come and join me, when suddenly I heard that a storm was brewing against me in Berne. It was attributed to the religious faction, but I have never been able to find out its original cause. The Senate, at the instigation of whom I do not know, seemed determined not to leave me quiet in my retirement. As soon as the town magistrate heard of this excitement he wrote on my behalf to several members of the government reproaching them for their blind intolerance and telling them that it was shameful to refuse a persecuted man of merit the asylum which their country extended to so many criminals.

Some men of judgement were of the opinion that the warmth of his reproaches, far from calming the senatorial excitement, merely served to exasperate it. However that may be, neither his influence nor his eloquence was enough to ward off the blow. Having early news of the order he would have to convey to me, he warned me in

* *L'Esprit des lois*, by Montesquieu.

† A feudal landowner, who originally had sufficient vassals to raise a standard.]

advance; and so as not to await that order, I departed the next day. The difficulty was to know where to go, seeing that Geneva and France were closed to me, and I could already foresee that in this respect each state would hasten to imitate its neighbour.

Mme Boy de La Tour suggested that I should go and live in an empty but fully furnished house belonging to her son in the village of Motiers, in the Val-de-Travers, in the county of Neuchâtel. I had only to cross a mountain to get there. This offer was particularly opportune because on the King of Prussia's territory I should naturally be safe from persecutions; at least religion could hardly be used as an excuse for them. But a secret objection, which I did not care to state, was quite enough to make me hesitate. That inborn love of justice that always consumed my heart, together with my covert sympathy for France, had inspired me with an aversion for the King of Prussia. He seemed to me, both in his principles and his conduct, to show violent disrespect for both natural law and human obligation. Among the framed prints which I had hung on the wall of my turret at Montmorency was a portrait of that prince, beneath which I had written a couplet of which this was the second line:

He thinks like a philosopher, but governs like a King.

This verse, which from any other pen would have been high praise, contained as I wrote it no ambiguous sense. It was, besides, only too clearly explained by the preceding line.* This verse had been seen by everyone who came to visit me, and that was no small number. The Chevalier de Lorenzi had even written it down to give to d'Alembert, and I had no doubt that d'Alembert had taken care to present it on my behalf to the King. I had further aggravated this first offence by a passage in *Émile*, in which it was quite clear whom I meant by Adrastus, King of the Daunians; and this reference had not escaped the critics, for Mme de Boufflers had several times broached the subject to me. So my name must certainly have been inscribed in red on the registers of the King of Prussia. Supposing too that his principles really were those that I had ascribed to him, my writings and their author could not fail, for that reason alone, to displease him. For it is well known that wicked men and tyrants have always borne me the most mortal hatred, even when they have not known me, on the simple reading of my works.

[* 'Glory and self-regard to him are God and law.' This line is said to have been written on the back, not on the face of the print: which somewhat upsets Rousseau's story.]

I had the courage, however, to put myself at his mercy, and I believed that I was not running much risk. I knew that base passions seldom master any but the weak, and take little hold on such strong minds as I had always recognized his to be. I considered that it was in keeping with his scheme of government to show magnanimity on such an occasion, and that it was not beyond his nature actually to be magnanimous. I considered that desire for a mean and easy revenge would never for a moment outweigh his love of glory; and putting myself in his place, I did not think it impossible that he would take advantage of this opportunity to overwhelm a man who had dared to think ill of him, with the weight of his generosity. I went therefore to set up house at Motiers with a confidence which I thought him capable of appreciating. I said to myself: 'When Jean-Jacques rises to the level of Coriolanus, can Frederick show himself inferior to the general of the Volsci?'

Colonel Roguin absolutely insisted on crossing the mountain with me and on seeing me installed at Motiers. A sister-in-law of Mme Boy de La Tour, a Madame Girardier, who found the house very useful, did not view my arrival with much pleasure. However, she put me in possession of my lodging with good grace, and I took my meals at her house until such time as Thérèse arrived and my little household was set up.

Realizing since my departure from Montmorency that henceforth I was to be a fugitive upon the earth, I hesitated before allowing her to join me and share the wandering life to which I saw I was condemned. I felt that by that disaster our relations would be changed, and that what had once been a favour and kindness on my part would henceforth be so on hers. If her affection remained proof against my misfortunes she would suffer deep distress, and her grief would add to my troubles. If my misfortune cooled her affection for me, she would make me see her constancy as a sacrifice; and instead of feeling the pleasure I took in sharing my last crust of bread with her, she would only be conscious of her own merit in consenting to follow me wherever fate might force me to go.

I must leave nothing unsaid. I have never concealed my poor Mamma's vices or my own, and I must show no greater favour to Thérèse. However warm a pleasure I take in honouring a person who is dear to me, I still do not wish to disguise her faults, if an involuntary change in the heart's affection is truly a fault. For a long while I had observed a cooling off on her part. I was aware that she no longer felt

for me as she had done in our good days; and I was the more conscious of the fact because I was as fond of her as ever. I was once more in the predicament which I had found so uncomfortable with Mamma; and in Thérèse's case it was no less uncomfortable. Let us not look for supernatural perfection; the case would be the same with any woman upon earth. The attitude I had taken with regard to my children, logical though it had seemed to me, had not always left me easy in my mind. While thinking out my *Treatise upon Education*, I felt that I had neglected some duties from which nothing could excuse me. So strong did my remorse finally grow that it almost drew from me a public confession of my fault at the beginning of *Émile*. The allusion, indeed, is so clear that after such a passage it is surprising that anyone had the courage to reproach me. My situation was, however, at that time still the same, or even worse, because of the animosity of my enemies, who wanted nothing better than to catch me at fault. I was afraid that I might repeat the offence and, not wishing to run the risk, preferred to condemn myself to abstinence rather than expose Thérèse to the risk of finding herself in the same condition once more. I had noticed besides that intercourse with women sensibly aggravated my complaint. The compensatory vice, of which I have never been able entirely to cure myself, seemed to me less deleterious. For this usual reason, therefore, I had formed resolutions which I had sometimes only imperfectly kept, but in which I had been persisting with more success during the last three or four years. It was from the beginning of that time that I had noticed a cooling in Thérèse. She persisted in her attachment to me, but it was out of duty, not out of love. This naturally diminished the pleasure in our relations, and I imagined that, relying as she could on my continuing to look after her, she might perhaps have preferred to stay in Paris rather than wander about the world with me. However she had shown such grief at our separation, had extracted such emphatic promises from me that we should come together again, and had expressed her desire so strongly since my departure both to the Prince de Conti and M. de Luxembourg, that far from daring to speak to her of separation I scarcely had the courage to think of it myself; and once my heart had told me how impossible it would be to do without her my only thought was to call her back at the earliest possible moment. I wrote to her to start, and she came. It was scarcely two months since I had left her, but this was our first separation for many years. We had felt it most cruelly, both of us. How violent was our first

embrace! Oh, how sweet are the tears of joy and affection, and how my heart feasts on them! Why have I been permitted to shed them so seldom?

On arriving at Motiers, I had written to Lord Keith, Marshal of Scotland and Governor of Neuchâtel,* to advise him that I had taken refuge on His Majesty's territory and to ask for his protection. He answered me with the generosity for which he is famous, and which I had expected. He invited me to visit him. I went to him with M. Martinet, lord of the manor of the Val-de-Travers, who was in great favour with His Excellency. The venerable appearance of that illustrious and virtuous Scot affected me powerfully; and from that moment there sprang up between us that strong affection, which on my part has always persisted, and which would have remained steady on his if those traitors who have robbed me of every consolation in life had not profited by my absence to impose on his old age and misrepresent me in his eyes.

George Keith, hereditary Marshal of Scotland and brother of the celebrated General Keith, who lived gloriously and died on the field of honour, had left his country in his youth, having been outlawed for his loyalty to the House of Stuart, with which he soon grew disgusted when he met with that spirit of injustice and tyranny in them, which was their dominant characteristic. He stayed for some time in Spain, where he liked the climate, and finally both he and his brother attached themselves to the King of Prussia, who was a good judge of men and received them as they deserved. He was well repaid for his welcome of them by the great services which Marshal Keith rendered him, and by something more precious still, the Lord Marshal's sincere friendship. This worthy man's great soul, in its republican pride, could only bow beneath the yoke of friendship; but in that case it bowed so completely that although his principles were very different from the King's, he could think of no interest but Frederick's from the moment he became attached to him. The King entrusted him with important business, sent him to Paris and to Spain; and finally, seeing that he was now old and needed rest, he gave him the governorship of Neuchâtel as a place of retirement in which to devote the rest of his life to the delightful occupation of making that small country happy.

When the people of Neuchâtel, who are fond of nothing but trimmings and tinsel, and are no judges of genuine material but think that

[* George Keith (1685-1778).]

intelligence lies in long phrases, met this cold and unceremonious man, they mistook his simplicity for pride, his candour for boorishness, his shortness of speech for stupidity, and revolted against his beneficent care for them, since in his anxiety to be helpful without wandering, he did not know how to flatter people he did not respect. In the ridiculous case of Petitpierre, who was driven out by his fellow clergymen for having tried to save them from eternal damnation, the Marshal, who had opposed the clergy's usurpations, found the whole country, whose part he was taking, in arms against him; and when I arrived this stupid disturbance was not yet quite over. At least, he had still the reputation of being subject to prejudices; and of all the imputations brought against him this was, perhaps, the least unjust. My first impulse, on meeting this venerable old man, was of pity for the leanness of his body, which was already emaciated by age. But when I looked up at his live, frank, and noble features I was overcome by a feeling of mingled respect and confidence which got the better of every other emotion. He answered the very short compliment I made him as I approached by speaking of something else, as if I had been here a week. He did not even ask us to sit down. The stiff lord of the manor remained standing. But I saw so welcoming a light in his lordship's sharp and piercing eye that I immediately felt at my ease, and without ceremony took a seat on the sofa at his side. From the familiar tone that he adopted from the start I realized that this freedom of mine had given him pleasure, and that he had said to himself: 'This man is not from Neuchâtel'.

Such was the singular effect of our great similarity of character. At an age in which the heart has already lost its natural warmth this good old man's warmed towards me in a way which surprised everybody. He came to see me at Motiers, on the pretext of shooting quail, and spent two days there without touching a gun; and such a friendship for that is the word – sprang up between us that we could not do without one another. The Château of Colombier, where he lived in the summer, was some eighteen miles from Motiers, and I went there every fortnight at least to spend a day and night with him, returning as if I had come like a pilgrim, my heart still brimming with the thought of him. The emotion that I had felt long ago on my walks from the hermitage to Eaubonne was certainly very different; but it was no sweeter than the feelings with which I approached Colombier. For often I shed tears of affection on the road, as I thought of the paternal kindness, of the pleasing virtues and the gentle philosophy of that

worthy old man. I called him my father, and he called me his child. These titles of affection will convey some partial idea of the bond that united us, but they will still be far from expressing the need we had of one another, or our continuous desire to be together. He absolutely insisted on putting me up in the Château of Colombier, and for a long time urged me to make the room I used there my permanent quarters. I told him at last that I felt freer at home, and that I preferred to spend my time in coming to see him. He approved of my frankness, and spoke of the matter no more. O my good lord and worthy father, how my heart still stirs when I think of you! Oh, the barbarians! What a blow they dealt me when they alienated you from me! But no, no, great man! You are and always will be the same to me, and who am myself still the same. They deceived you, but they did not change you.

My Lord Marshal is not without faults; he is wise, but he is human. He has the most penetrating mind, the most delicate tact that any man could possess, and the most profound knowledge of men; and yet he sometimes allows himself to be deceived and cannot be undeceived. His temper is strange, and there is something odd and fantastic in his turn of mind. He appears to forget people he sees every day, and then quite unexpectedly remembers them. His attentions seem misplaced, his presents are capricious and unconventional. He suddenly gives or sends anything that comes into his head, it may be valuable or utterly valueless. A young Genevese presents himself to him, wishing to enter the King of Prussia's service, and my lord gives him, instead of a letter, a little bag full of peas which he charges him to hand to the King who, on receiving this singular recommendation, instantly finds a post for the bearer. These men of exalted genius have a common language that vulgar spirits will never understand. These little eccentricities, like a pretty woman's affectations, only made the Lord Marshal more interesting to me. I felt sure then, and it was subsequently proved to me, that they did not influence his feelings or his obligations to his friends in serious matters. But in his methods of performing a kindness, it is true, he displayed the same eccentricity as in his manners. I will quote a single instance of a trifling nature. As the journey from Motiers to Colombier was too much for me to do in a day, I generally divided it by leaving after dinner and sleeping at Brot, which is half way. The innkeeper, whose name was Sandoz, having a favour of extreme importance to ask of Berlin, requested me to induce His Excellency to ask it for him. Agreed. I took him with me, left him

in the ante-chamber, and mentioned his business to my lord, who did not reply. The morning passed, and as we crossed the hall to go to dinner I saw poor Sandoz weary with waiting. Thinking that my lord had forgotten him, I mentioned his business again before we sat down to table. Still no answer. I found this method of showing me that I was being a nuisance rather harsh, and held my tongue, pitying poor Sandoz in my heart. When I travelled back next day I was most surprised at the warm thanks he gave me for his kind reception and the good dinner which he had eaten at his Excellency's, who moreover had taken charge of his petition. Three weeks later my lord sent him the order he had asked for, forwarded by the minister and signed by the King; and all this without having vouchsafed to me or to Sandoz a word of reply on this subject, which I had supposed he did not wish to interest himself in.

I should like to go on talking for ever about George Keith; my last happy memories are connected with him. All the rest of my life has been nothing but afflictions and heartaches, which I find it so sad to recall, and which come to me in so confused a form that I can no longer reduce my story to any sort of order. Henceforth I shall be obliged to arrange my facts haphazard, as they come to my mind.

I was very soon relieved of my anxiety in the matter of asylum by the King's reply to the Marshal, in whom, as can be imagined, I had found a good advocate. Not only did His Majesty sanction George Keith's action, but – for I must conceal nothing – he commissioned him to give me twelve *louis*. The good Marshal, embarrassed by such a commission, did not know how to execute it delicately, and tried to soften the insult by changing the money into provisions and informing me that he had orders to provide me with wood and coal on which to start my modest housekeeping. He added also, perhaps on his own initiative, that the King would be delighted to have a little house built for me, to my requirements, if I would choose a site. This last offer greatly affected me, and made me forget the stinginess of the other. Without accepting either of them, I looked on Frederick as my benefactor and protector, and became so sincerely attached to him that from that moment, instead of grudging him his successes, I became greatly concerned for his glory. When peace was signed a little while afterwards I expressed my joy by an illumination in very good taste. It took the form of a row of garlands with which I decorated the house in which I was living, and on which, I must admit, I spent, in a spirit of revengeful pride, almost as much money as he had offered

to give me. Once peace was made, I believed that with his military and political glory at its height, he would win glory of another kind by reviving his dominions, by restoring their agriculture and commerce, by creating a new soil and populating it anew, by maintaining peace among all his neighbours, and making himself the arbiter of Europe where once he had been its terror. For he could lay down his sword without danger, in the certainty that he would not be compelled to take it up again. Seeing that he did not disarm, I feared that he might fail to make good use of his advantages, and was only half a great man. I ventured to write to him on the subject, adopting the familiar tone most apt to please men of his stamp, in order to bring to his ears the sacred voice of truth which so few kings are born to hear. It was in private, as between our two selves, that I took this liberty. I did not even let my Lord Marshal into the secret, and sent him my letter for the King under seal. He forwarded it without inquiring what it contained. The King made no reply, and some time afterwards, when the Marshal went to Berlin, simply told him that I had given him a good scolding. From this I understood that my letter had not been favourably received, and that the frankness of my enthusiasm had been taken for mere clumsy pedantry. At bottom it may really have been nothing more. Perhaps I did not say what I should have done, and failed to strike the right note. I can only answer for the feeling that made me take up the pen.

A little while after I had settled in at Motiers-Travers, having received every possible assurance that I should be left in peace, I assumed Armenian costume. It was not a new idea, but had occurred to me several times in the course of my life. It recurred to me often at Montmorency, where my frequent recourse to catheters, which often compelled me to keep to my room, made me see the advantage of a long robe. I was tempted to avail myself of the opportunity offered by an Armenian tailor, who often came to Montmorency to visit a relative. Indeed I should have assumed my new dress in spite of what people might say, for about that I cared very little. However, before doing so, I wanted Mme de Luxembourg's opinion, and she advised me strongly in favour of the change. So I had a little Armenian outfit made. But the storm it raised caused me to defer wearing it until calmer times, and it was not till some months later that, forced by more attacks to have fresh recourse to catheters, I felt I could safely wear my new clothing at Motiers, especially after I had consulted the pastor of the place, who told me that I could wear it even

in church without offence. I put on the jacket, the caftan, the fur cap and the belt therefore; and after having attended divine service in this costume I saw nothing wrong in wearing it at my Lord Marshal's. When His Excellency saw my attire he greeted me quite simply with *Salamaleki*,* which concluded the matter, and I never wore any other dress.

Now that I had completely given up literature, my only thought was to lead a quiet and peaceful life, in so far as that depended upon myself. When alone I have never known boredom, even if absolutely without occupation; my imagination can fill all voids, and is in itself enough to occupy me. It is only inactive gossip indoors, where people sit opposite each other moving nothing but their tongues, that I have never been able to stand. When out for a walk or a stroll it is not so bad; at least one's feet and eyes are employed. But to stay in with folded arms and talk about the weather and the flies or, what is worse, to sit exchanging compliments, is to me an unbearable torture. So as not to live quite like a savage, I decided to learn to make laces and took my cushion round with me on visits, or worked at my door, like the women, and gossiped with passers-by. Thus I was able to bear the empty chatter and to spend my time without boredom at my neighbours', several of whom were pleasant enough women and not without intelligence. One of them, Isabelle d'Ivernois by name, the daughter of the public prosecutor of Neuchâtel, seemed to me deserving of my especial friendship, of which she had no reason to complain. For I gave her useful advice and rendered her services on important occasions. Indeed she is now a virtuous and respected mother of a family, and it is perhaps to me that she owes her husband, the preservation of her reason, her happiness and her life. For my part I am indebted to her for much gentle consolation, and particularly during the most melancholy winter, when my maladies and my sufferings were at their height, and she used to come and spend long evenings with Thérèse and myself, which she knew how to make very short by the charm of her disposition and by our mutual confidences. She called me 'papa', and I called her 'daughter'; and these names, which we still use with one another, will never cease, I hope, to be as dear to her as to me. To find some use for my laces, I gave them as presents to my young friends on their marriages on condition that they should tackle their children. Her elder sister received one on these terms, which she fulfilled. Isabelle received one as well and deserved it

[*Peace be with you (Arabic).]

equally, so far as her intentions went; but she was not lucky enough to be able to carry them out. On sending them their laces, I wrote them both letters, the first of which has had some circulation. But the second one did not create such a noise; friendship advances rather more quietly.

I do not propose to enter into details about the connexions which I made in my neighbourhood; but I must mention my relations with Colonel Pury, who had a house on the mountain where he used to spend the summer. I was not very anxious to make his acquaintance because I knew that he was in very bad odour at Court, and with my Lord Marshal, whom he did not visit. However, as he came to see me and showed me great civility, I had to return his call. We continued to visit, sometimes dining with one another, and it was at his house that I met M. Du Peyrou, who from an acquaintance became so intimate a friend that I cannot pass over his name in silence.

M. Du Peyrou was from America, the son of a commandant of Surinam, whose widow married his successor, M. Le Chambrier of Neuchâtel. Widowed once more, she had come with her son to settle in her second husband's country. Du Peyrou, who was an only child, was very rich and much beloved by his mother. He had been most carefully brought up, and had profited by his education. He had acquired partial knowledge of many subjects and some taste for the arts, and he particularly prided himself on having cultivated his powers of reason. His cold and philosophical Dutch manner, his swarthy complexion, and his silent, reserved disposition strongly supported his picture of himself. He was deaf and gouty, though still young. This made all his movements very solemn and deliberate; and though he loved to argue, sometimes even at some length, he did not speak much because he could not hear. His whole appearance impressed me. 'Here is a thinker,' I told myself, 'a wise man, a man one would be glad to have as a friend.' To complete his conquest of me, he often directed his remarks to me without ever paying me a compliment. He rarely spoke about myself or my books and even more rarely about himself. He was not without ideas, and all that he said was fairly accurate. His accuracy and consistency attracted me to him. His mind had neither the loftiness nor the subtlety of my Lord Marshal's, but it was just as simple and to that extent he seemed to represent him. I did not become infatuated with him, but became attached to him out of a respect which little by little led to friendship. In his case I totally forgot the objection I had taken to Baron d'Holbach – that he

as too wealthy – and I think that I was wrong. I have come to doubt whether a man possessed of a great fortune, whoever he may be, can sincerely like my principles and their originator.

For quite a long time I saw very little of Du Peyrou, because I never went to Neuchâtel and he only came once a year to visit Colonel Turgot on his mountain. Why did I not go to Neuchâtel? For a childish reason that I must not omit to mention.

Although, under the protection of the King of Prussia and my Lord Marshal, I at first escaped persecution in my retreat, I did not escape the hostility of the people, the municipal magistrates, and the ministers. Once France had given the signal, it was no longer in good taste not at least to offer me some insult; people would have been afraid of appearing to disapprove of my persecutors if they did not incite them. The Assembly of Neuchâtel – that is to say the city's energy in conclave – gave the signal by trying to rouse the State Council against me. When this attempt did not succeed, they addressed themselves to the municipal magistracy, who immediately pronounced a ban on my book, and by treating me with scant civility on every possible occasion gave me to understand – and even openly said – that if I had tried to settle in the town, I should not have been allowed to. They filled their *Mercure* with stupidities and the most cynical cant which, though it only aroused the ridicule of intelligent people, did not fail to provoke the mob and incite them against me. But, if I listened to them, I ought nevertheless to have been very grateful to them for their extreme kindness in letting me live at Motiers – where they had no authority. They would have been glad to measure me out air by the pint, provided I paid them a high price for it. They wanted me to feel obliged to them for the protection which the King afforded me, in spite of them, and which they strove unremittingly to deprive me of. At last, when they did not succeed, having done me all the harm they were able and abused me as hard as they could, they made a merit of their impotence and tried to impress me with their kindness in allowing me to stay in their country. My only answer would have been to laugh in their faces, but I was stupid enough to be annoyed, and committed the absurd error of refusing to enter Neuchâtel, a resolution which I kept for almost two years, as if I were not showing such creatures too much consideration by paying attention to their proceedings which, good or bad, cannot really be attributed to them, since they never act except under outside pressure. Moreover, uncultivated and unenlightened minds, who know of

nothing that deserves their respect except influence, power, and money, are far from even suspecting that some deference is due to talent, and that it is a disgraceful thing to insult it.

A certain village mayor who had been dismissed for misuse of public funds, said to the magistrate of Val-de-Travers, the husband of my Isabelle: 'They say that this Rousseau is such a clever man. Bring him to me, so that I can see if it is true.' Really the disapprobation of a man who adopts a tone like that should not much trouble those who suffer under it.

Judging by the way in which I had been treated in Paris, Geneva, Berne, and even Neuchâtel, I did not expect any better consideration from the local pastor. I had, however, been introduced to him by Mme Boy de La Tour, and he had given me a kind reception. But in that country, where everyone is flattered alike, courtesies mean nothing. However, having been solemnly readmitted into the Reformed Church, and living now in a Protestant country, I could not refrain from the public profession of the faith to which I had been reconciled without failing in my vows and in my duties as a citizen. So I attended divine service. I was afraid, however, that by presenting myself at the Communion table I might expose myself to the insult of a refusal. For it was most improbable that after the fuss that had been created by the Council at Geneva and by the Assembly at Neuchâtel, the pastor would quietly give me the Sacrament in his church. Seeing that the time for Communion was approaching, I made up my mind to write to M. de Montmollin – which was the minister's name – as an act of goodwill and declare that I still adhered in my heart to the Reformed Church. I told him at the same time, in order to avoid all disputes about the creed, that I did not wish to receive any special explanation on points of dogma. Having thus done the right thing in that quarter, I waited calmly, feeling not the least doubt that M. de Montmollin would refuse to admit me without preliminary discussion, which I would not enter into; and so the whole matter would be settled without any blame attaching to me. But things did not happen like that. Quite unexpectedly M. de Montmollin came to inform me, not only that he would admit me to Communion under the conditions I had laid down, but furthermore that he and his elders felt highly honoured to have me in the congregation. I never received a greater surprise in my life, or a more welcome one. Always to live alone on the earth seemed to me a very sad fate, particularly when under adversity. Amidst so many proscriptions and persecutions

found extreme pleasure in being able to say to myself: 'At least I am among my brothers', and I went to Communion with a warmth in my heart and tears of emotion in my eyes, which was perhaps, in God's eyes, the most acceptable state in which one could approach Him.

Some time later my lord sent me a letter from Mme de Boufflers, which had come – or at least I presumed so – by way of d'Alembert, who knew the Marshal. In this letter, the first which that lady had written to me since I left Montmorency, she severely scolded me for having written to M. de Montmollin and, even more, for having taken Communion. I was at a loss to understand the purpose of her reprimand, for ever since my trip to Geneva I had openly proclaimed myself a Protestant, and I had most publicly attended service at the Dutch Chapel without anyone finding anything wrong about it. It amused me that the Countess de Boufflers should concern herself with the direction of my conscience in the matter of religion. However, as I did not doubt that her intentions – although I did not understand them – were the best in the world, I did not take offence at her strange attack and wrote her an unruffled answer explaining my reasons.

Meanwhile printed abuse went on as before, and its kindly authors reproached the authorities for treating me too mildly. This barking chorus, the instigators of which continued to act under cover, had something sinister and alarming about it. For my part, I did not get excited, but let them bark. I was told that the Sorbonne had passed a decree of censure; I did not believe it. What had the Sorbonne to do with the matter? Did they want to proclaim that I was not a good Catholic? Everybody knew it. Did they want to prove that I was not a good Calvinist? What was that to them? They would be taking on a singular responsibility if they were to usurp the office of our ministers. Before I saw the document I thought that it was being circulated in the name of the Sorbonne in order to make its members ridiculous, and I was even more of that opinion after I read it. In the end, when I was no longer in doubt that it was genuine, the only thing I could think was that the whole Sorbonne wanted putting into a lunatic asylum.

1763 Another publication affected me rather more, because it emanated from a man I had always respected, a man whose firmness I admired, while pitying his blindness. I am speaking of the Archbishop of Paris and his mandatory letter against me.

I felt it only fair to myself to reply to it. I could do so without hurt to my self-esteem, for this was very much the same situation as I had been in with the King of Poland. I have never liked brutal disputes after Voltaire's fashion. I can only fight in a dignified way, and I like the man I attack to be worthy of my blows before I condescend to defend myself. I had no doubt that this mandatory letter was the work of the Jesuits; and although they were in distress themselves at the time I could still recognize their old principle of crushing those in distress. I could also follow my old principle, therefore, of showing respect for the titular author and demolishing the work; and this I think I succeeded in doing.

I found my stay at Motiers very pleasant, and all I needed to decide me to end my days there was an assured subsistence. But living in that district was fairly expensive, and I had seen my old plans upset by the break-up of my household, by the setting up of a fresh one, by the sale or dispersal of all my furniture, and by the expenses I had been forced to incur since leaving Montmorency. Every day I saw the little capital I possessed dwindling before my eyes. Two or three years would be enough to consume the rest; and I could see no way of building it up again, unless I began to write books once more: an ill-omened trade, which I had just now abandoned.

Convinced that things would soon change in my favour and that the public would recover from its frenzy and put the authorities to shame, I merely sought to make my resources last till that happy change took place, which would put me in a better state to choose among the various possibilities that might offer themselves. Therefore I took up my *Dictionary of Music* once more, which after ten years' labour was now well advanced, and only required to be finally corrected and copied out. My books, which had recently been sent on to me, enabled me to complete the work; and my papers, which were sent at the same time, put me in the position to begin my projected memoirs, which I intended to be my sole occupation from then on. I began by copying some letters into a notebook which would guide my memory in the order of facts and dates. I had already sorted out the correspondence that I wanted to keep for this purpose, and over almost the last ten years I had an uninterrupted sequence. However, on arranging them for copying I found a gap in them that surprised me. This gap extended over nearly six months, from October 1756 till the following March. I perfectly remembered having put into my collection

Chenonceaux, and others, which filled this gap; but they were no longer to be found. What had become of them? Had someone rifled my papers during the months they had lain at the Hôtel de Luxembourg? That was inconceivable, and I had seen M. de Luxembourg take the key of the room in which I had deposited them. Since several letters from female correspondents and all Diderot's were undated, and since I had been compelled to supply the dates from memory, as I was groping in the dark, in order to arrange them in their proper order, I thought at first that I had made some mistakes in dating; and I went over all the letters that had no date, or for which I had supplied one, to see if I could not discover among them those that would fill the gap. The attempt failed; I saw that the gap was a real one, and that the letters had quite certainly been removed. By whom and why — that was what beat me. These letters, dating from before my great quarrels, from the time of my first intoxication over *Julie*, could not be of interest to anyone. At most they contained some cavillings by Diderot, some bantering from Deleyre, protestations of friendship from Mme de Chenonceaux, and even from Mme d'Épinay, with whom I was then on the best possible terms. To whom could these letters be of any importance? What did they intend to do with them? It was not till seven years later that I suspected the frightful purpose of that theft.

Once certain that they had disappeared, I began to look among my rough copies to see if I could discover any other losses. I found one or two which, in view of my defective memory, made me suppose that other things would be missing also from among my multitude of papers. The losses that I noticed were the rough copy of my *Morals of Sensibility* and the extract from the *Adventures of My Lord Edward*. The latter, I admit, made me suspect Mme de Luxembourg. It was La Roche, her personal servant, who had forwarded me those papers, and I could imagine no one else who could feel any interest in that fragment. But what interest could she have in the other piece, or in the missing letters, which, even with the worst intentions, could be put to no use that would injure me, short of actually falsifying them? As for the Marshal, knowing his unwavering honesty and the genuineness of his friendship for me, I could not for a moment suspect him. I could not even fix my suspicions on Mme de Luxembourg. The most reasonable thing that occurred to me, after hours of racking my brains to discover the thief, was to attach the blame on d'Alembert, who had already wormed his way into her good graces and might have found

a means of rummaging among those papers and taking away what he pleased, whether manuscripts or letters, his intention being either to make some trouble for me, or merely to appropriate something that might be useful to him. My guess was that he had been misled by the title *The Morals of Sensibility*, and had imagined that here was the plan of a real treatise on materialism, which he would have used against me in a manner easy to imagine. Feeling sure that he would soon be undeceived on examining the manuscript, and having made up my mind entirely to give up writing, I did not worry much about these thefts, which were not the first that I had sustained at his hands* without complaining. Soon I thought no more of that breach of trust than if it had never been, and began to collect the materials left to me in order to begin work on my *Confessions*.

I had long believed that the society of ministers at Geneva, or the citizens and burgesses at least, would protest against the infringement of the edict in the decree made against me. All remained quiet, at least on the surface; for there was general discontent which was only waiting for an opportunity to show itself. My friends, or those who called themselves such, wrote me letter after letter, entreating me to put myself at their head and assuring me of a public apology from the Council. Fear of the trouble and disorder my presence might cause prevented me from yielding to their entreaties and, true to the vow I had once made never to mix myself up in any civil dissension in my own country, I preferred to let the wrong remain and be perpetually banished from my native land rather than return by violent and dangerous means. I had certainly expected legal and peaceful remonstrances on the part of the citizens against an infraction of the law which greatly affected them. There was none. Their leaders were less anxious for the real redress of grievances than for a chance to show their importance. They intrigued, but kept silence, and allowed the gossips and the sanctimonious – or those who pretended to be – to give tongue, they being put forward by the Council to render me odious to the people, and to make its insults look like the product of religious zeal.

* I had found in his *Elements of Music* a great deal taken from the articles I had written on music for the *Encyclopaedia*, and which I had delivered to him some years before the publication of his *Elements*. I do not know what share he may have had in a book entitled *The Dictionary of the Fine Arts*, but in it I have found articles copied from mine word for word, and that long before those same articles were printed in the *Encyclopaedia*.

After waiting in vain for more than a year for someone to protest against their illegal procedure, I at last made up my mind; and seeing myself deserted by my fellow citizens, I decided to renounce my ungrateful country, in which I had never lived, from which I had never received goods or services, and by which, as a reward for the honour I had tried to bestow on it, I found myself so disgracefully treated; and this by unanimous consent, for those who ought to have spoken had said nothing. I wrote therefore to the chief syndic for that year, who I believe was M. Favre, a letter in which I formally renounced my right of citizenship, at the same time carefully observing that decency and moderation of expression that I have always employed in those acts of pride which my enemies' cruelty has so often wrung from me in my misfortunes.

This step at last opened the citizens' eyes. Feeling that they had acted against their own interests in abandoning me, they took up my defence when it was too late. They had other grievances which they added to mine, and they made it the subject of several very well-reasoned protests, which they expanded and reinforced, as the rude and discouraging refusals of the Council, which felt that it had the French Ministry's support, made them more conscious of a design to subjugate them. These arguments gave rise to various pamphlets which decided nothing, until suddenly there appeared the *Letters written from the Country*, a work framed with infinite skill in support of the Council, by which the Party of Public Liberty was reduced to silence and temporarily crushed. This work, a lasting monument to the rare talents of its author, was by Tronchin the Public Prosecutor,* an enlightened and intelligent man, and well versed in the laws and government of the Republic. *Siluit terra.*†

1764 The Party of Liberty, recovering from their initial overthrow, undertook a reply, and came off tolerably well in time. But they all looked to me as the only man who could enter the lists against such an enemy with any hope of overthrowing him. I admit that I thought the same and, urged on by my former fellow citizens, who informed me that it was my duty to help them with my pen in a plight of which I had been the cause, I undertook to refute the *Letters written from the Country*; and I parodied its title by calling

[* A cousin of Rousseau's old enemy, the doctor.]

† The earth kept silence.

mine *Letters written from the Mountain*.^{*} I conceived and carried through this enterprise with such secrecy that, at a meeting I had at Thonon with the chief of the Party of Liberty to discuss their affairs, during which they showed me the outline of their reply, I did not so much as mention mine, which was already written. For I was afraid that some obstacle might be put in the way of its printing if the magistrates or my private enemies were to get the least wind of it. I could not, however, prevent the work from becoming known in France before its publication, where they thought it better to let it appear rather than give me too clear an idea how they had discovered my secret. I will put down what I learnt for certain about the matter, which is very little indeed, but I will say nothing about my conjectures.

I had almost as many visitors at Motiers as at the Hermitage or Montmorency; but most of them were of a very different kind. Hitherto my callers had been people who shared some of my talents or tastes or principles, who made our common interests the excuse for their visits, and immediately introduced subjects which I could discuss with them. At Motiers it was quite different, especially with my visitors from France. These were officers or other people who had no taste for literature, most of whom had not even read my works, but who nevertheless, from what they told me, had travelled a hundred, a hundred and fifty, two hundred, or three hundred miles in order to see and admire the illustrious man, the celebrated man, the most celebrated man, etc. For from that time people were continually flinging in my face the coarsest and most impudent flatteries, which hitherto I had been spared, thanks to the respect felt for me by my visitors. As the majority of these intruders did not even condescend to tell me who or what they were, we shared no field of knowledge in common; and as they had neither read nor glanced through my works I did not know what to talk to them about. So I waited for them to start the conversation, since it was up to them to know and to inform me why they had come to see me. Naturally this did not lead to discussions which interested me very much, though they may have interested them. That depended on what they wanted to know. For as I was not mistrustful I expressed myself freely on every question that they thought fit to raise; and they went away, as a rule, as conversant as I with all the details of my situation.

One visitor of this kind was M. de Feins, equerry to the Queen and

^{*} *Lettres écrites de la montagne.*

a captain in the Queen's cavalry, who was so persevering as to stay some days at Motiers, and even to follow me on foot, leading his horse by the bridle, as far as La Ferrière, though we had no point in common except that we both knew Mlle Fel, and both played at cup-and-ball. Before and after M. de Feins' visit, I had another, which was much odder. Two men arrived on foot, each leading a mule carrying his scanty luggage. They put up at the inn, rubbed down their mules themselves, and asked if they could see me. To judge by their appearance, these muleteers looked like dealers in contraband; and news immediately got round that some smugglers had come to visit me. Their mere manner of approach, however, told me that they were persons of quite another kind. But if they were not smugglers they might still be adventurers, and this suspicion kept me on my guard for some time. They were not long in reassuring me. One was M. de Montauban, known as the Count de La Tour du Pin, a gentleman from Dauphiné; the other was M. Dastier of Carpentras, a retired soldier, who had put his Cross of St Louis in his pocket, since he must not display it. The gentlemen were both very pleasant and both of them most amusing. Their conversation was agreeable and interesting; and their method of travel, one that appealed so much more to me than to the French nobility in general, gave me a sort of liking of them, which their company could not fail to reinforce. But our acquaintance did not end there. It still persists, and they have come back to see me several times, not on foot, however, though that was good enough as a first introduction. But the more I have seen of those gentlemen the less I have found in common between their tastes and mine, the less I have felt that their principles were my principles, or that they were familiar with my writings, or that there was any real sympathy between us. What did they want with me then? Why did they come travelling in that way? Why did they stay several days? Why did they come back several times? Why were they anxious to be my guests? It did not occur to me then to ask these questions. But sometimes I have put them to myself since.

Touched by their friendly advances, my heart surrendered without reflection, to M. Dastier especially, whose more open manner pleased me more than his friend's. I even remained in correspondence with him; and when I wanted to get the *Letters written from the Mountain* printed, it occurred to me to apply to him in order to outwit those who were waiting for my parcel on the Dutch post. He had said a good deal, and perhaps deliberately, about the freedom of the press at Avignon, and

had offered me his services, should I have anything to be printed there. I took advantage of his offer, and sent him my first sheets, one by one, by the post. But, after keeping them some time, he sent them back, informing me that no bookseller dared undertake publication; and I was compelled to go back to Rey, taking care only to send him my manuscript books one by one, and never to send the next before I had received acknowledgement of the last. Before the publication of the work I learnt that it had been seen in the ministerial offices; and d'Escherny of Neuchâtel talked to me about a book called *The Man of the Mountain* which d'Holbach had told him was mine. I assured him, as was quite true, that I had never written a book with that title. When the letters appeared he was furious and accused me of lying, though I had told him nothing but the truth. That is how I knew for certain that my manuscript had been seen. Being certain that Rey was trustworthy, I was forced to transfer my suspicions elsewhere, and the conclusion I preferred to come to was that my parcels had been opened in the post.

Another acquaintance which I made at much the same time, though at first only by correspondence, was M. Laliaud of Nîmes, who wrote to me from Paris, asking me to send him my silhouette, which he told me he needed for a marble bust of me which he was having made by Le Moine, to put in his library. If this was a piece of flattery invented to disarm me, it completely succeeded. I concluded that a man who wanted to have my bust in marble in his library must be steeped in my works, and therefore in my principles, and that he loved me because his soul was at one with mine. I could hardly have helped being attracted by such an idea. Subsequently I met M. de Laliaud and found him most anxious to do me a number of little services and to meddle considerably with my affairs. But, beyond that, I doubt whether the small number of books he has read in his life has included anything written by me. I do not know whether he has a library, or whether it would be of any use to him if he had, and as for the bust, it got no further than a wretched clay model, made by Le Moine, from which he had a hideous print engraved, which nevertheless still circulates under my name as if it bore some resemblance to me.

The only Frenchman who seemed to visit me out of a liking for my works and my opinions was a young officer of the Limousin regiment, M. Séguier de Saint-Brisson by name, who used to cut a brilliant figure in Paris and in the world, and perhaps still does, thanks to a few pleasant accomplishments and some pretensions to wit. He

ad visited me at Montmorency in the winter before my disaster, and found a liveliness of feeling in him which pleased me. He afterwards wrote to me at Motiers; and either out of a wish to flatter me, or because his head was really turned by *Émile*, he informed me that he was resigning the service in order to live an independent life, and that he was learning the trade of carpenter. He had an elder brother, a captain in the same regiment, who monopolized his mother's affection. She was a violently religious woman under the thumb of some hypocritical priest, and treated her younger son very badly, accusing him of irreligion, and also of the unpardonable crime of intimacy with her. These were the grievances which drove him to the point of breaking with his mother and taking the measures I have just mentioned: all in order to play the little *Émile*.

Alarmed by his impetuosity, I hurriedly wrote to try and make him change his mind. I put all the strength of which I was capable into my exhortations, and they were successful. He returned to his filial duties, and withdrew the resignation he had put into his colonel's hands; which that officer had been prudent enough to make no use of, in order to give him time to think the matter over. Cured from this folly, Saint-Brisson committed another a little less outrageous but hardly more to my liking. He became an author, publishing two or three pamphlets in succession, which showed some talent. But I shall never have to reproach myself for having given him such praise as would encourage him to pursue that career.

Some time afterwards he came to see me, and we made a joint pilgrimage to the island of Saint-Pierre. I found him different on this trip from the man he had seemed at Montmorency. There was something affected about him, which did not upset me much at the time, but which I have often remembered since. He visited me once more at the Hôtel de Saint-Simon, as I was passing through Paris on my way to England. There I learnt something he had never told me: that he frequented high society and quite often saw Mme de Luxembourg. He gave me no sign of life when I was at Trye, and sent me no message by his relative, Mlle Séguier, who was my neighbour, and who has ever seemed very favourably disposed towards me. In short M. de Saint-Brisson's passionate attachment ended suddenly, like my intimacy with M. de Feins. But whereas de Feins owed me nothing, Saint-Brisson was in my debt – unless the stupidities I had saved him from committing were only a pretence on his part, which really they may very well have been.

I had just as many, and even more visits from Geneva as well. The Delucs, father and son, chose me one after the other for their sick-nurse. The father fell ill on the way, the son was ill when he left Geneva, and they both came to recuperate with me. Pastors, relatives, religious humbugs, and persons of every description came from Geneva and from Switzerland, not, like those from France, to admire and chaff me, but for the purpose of scolding and catechizing me. The only one who pleased me was Moultou, who came for a visit of three or four days, and whom I should have liked to keep longer. The most constant of them all and the most persistent, who finally overcame me by his importunities, was a M. d'Ivernois, a Genevese merchant and a French refugee, who was related to the public prosecutor of Neuchâtel. This M. d'Ivernois of Geneva came to Motiers twice a year for the sole purpose of seeing me, and stayed at my house from morning to night for several days on end, joining me in my walks and bringing me hundreds of little presents. Thus he wormed his way into my confidence, against my will, and interfered in all my business despite the fact that we had no ideas, tastes, feelings, or interests in common. I doubt whether he had read a single book of any kind from beginning to end in all his life, or even knew what mine were about. When I began to collect plants, he came with me on my botanizing excursions, without any taste for the pursuit, or anything to say to me; nor had I anything to say to him. He was even so bold as to spend three whole days alone with me in an inn at Goumains, from which I had hoped to drive him by dint of boring him and letting him see how much he bored me. But for all that, I was never able to break down his incredible persistence, or to discover the reason for it.

Among all these acquaintances, which I only made and kept up under compulsion, I must not pass over the only one that was pleasing to me, and about which I felt real emotion. I am thinking of a young Hungarian who came to live at Neuchâtel and moved to Motiers some months after I settled there myself. He was known locally as the Baron de Sauttern, the name under which he had been introduced from Zürich. He was tall and well-built, his features were pleasant, and he was gentle and sociable in conversation. He told everybody, and gave me to understand myself, that he had come to Neuchâtel solely on my account, in order to learn virtue in his youth through intercourse with me. His expression, his air, his manners seemed to me in keeping with his words; and I should have considered myself lacking in a most important duty if I had turned a young man away in whom

saw nothing but pleasant qualities, and who had so praiseworthy a motive for seeking me out. I can never give my affection by halves, and soon he had my entire friendship, my entire confidence. We became inseparable. He accompanied me on all my walking expeditions, and grew to enjoy them. I took him to my Lord Marshal, who was extremely kind to him. As he could not yet express himself in French, he spoke and wrote to me only in Latin; I replied in French. But this mixture of the two languages did not make our conversations any less fluent or less lively in any way. He told me about his family, his affairs and his adventures, and about the Court of Vienna, with the domestic details of which he seemed well acquainted. In short, for nearly two years, during which we were on terms of the greatest intimacy, I invariably found him to be a gentleman of character, great personal cleanliness, and extreme propriety in his language; in fact he had all the marks of a man of breeding, which made me esteem him too highly not to love him.

When my intimacy with him was at its greatest, d'Ivernois wrote to me from Geneva to warn me against a young Hungarian who had come to settle near me, for he had been assured that he was a spy sent by the French ministry to observe me. This warning was calculated to afford me particular uneasiness because everybody in my own district was advising me to keep on my guard; for I was being watched, and they were hoping to lure me on to French soil and there do me some injury.

In order to shut my stupid advisers' mouths once and for all, I proposed to Sauttern, without a word of warning, that we should take a walk to Pontarlier. He agreed, and when we got there I gave him d'Ivernois' letter to read. Then, embracing him warmly, I said: 'Sauttern needs no proof of my confidence, but the public requires proof that I know it is not misplaced.' That embrace was very sweet; it was one of those spiritual pleasures that persecutors can never know, and of which they can never rob the oppressed.

I shall never believe that Sauttern was a spy, or that he betrayed me; but he did deceive me. When I opened my heart to him unreservedly he was so bold as to keep his own constantly shut and to delude me with lies. He invented some story which convinced me that his presence was necessary in his own country. I entreated him to set out without delay. He set out, and when I supposed him already in Hungary I learnt that he was at Strasbourg. It was not the first time he had been there. He had upset a marriage in the town, and the

husband had written to me, knowing that he was in the habit of visiting me. I had done all I could to recall the young woman to virtue and Sauttern to his duty. When I thought they had completely broken it off they had come together again, and the husband himself had been so obliging as to take the young man back into the house. After that there was nothing more for me to say. I discovered that the so-called baron had imposed on me with a heap of lies. His name was not Sauttern but Sauttersheim. As for the title of baron which he was given in Switzerland, I could not blame him for that, since he had never assumed it himself. But I have no doubt that he was really a gentleman by birth, and my Lord Marshal, who was a judge of men and had been in Hungary, always looked on him and treated him as such.

Immediately after his departure the maid at the inn at Motiers, where he dined, declared that she was pregnant by him. She was such a dirty slut, and Sauttern, who was generally esteemed and respected as a decent and well-behaved young man, so particularly prided himself on his cleanliness, that everyone was shocked by her effrontery. The most attractive women in the district, who had vainly lavished their charms upon him, were furious, and I was beside myself with indignation. I made every effort to get the impudent woman arrested, offering to pay all expenses and go bail for Sauttersheim. I wrote to him strong in the conviction, not only that her pregnancy was not of his doing, but that it was a pretence, and that the whole business was nothing but a trick on the part of his enemies and mine. I asked him to return to the district to confound the creature and whoever was prompting her. I was surprised at the weakness of his reply. He wrote to the pastor whose parishioner the slut was, and tried to hush the affair up. In view of which I ceased to interest myself in the matter, being greatly surprised that so debauched a man could have had sufficient control of himself to make me believe in his decency throughout our very close intimacy.

From Strasbourg Sauttersheim went to Paris to seek his fortune, but only found poverty. He wrote to me to confess his sins. My bowels were moved by the memory of our old friendship, and I sent him some money. In the next year, when I passed through Paris, I saw him in much the same state. But he was then a great friend of M. Laliaud, although I could not find out how he had made his acquaintance, and whether it was an old or a new one. Two years afterwards Sauttersheim returned to Strasbourg; from there he wrote to me, and there

died. That is the brief story of our relationship, and all that I know out his adventures. But whilst I deplore the fate of that unhappy young man, I shall never cease to believe that he was a gentleman by birth, and that his disreputable behaviour was only the effect of the situations into which he fell.

Such were the acquisitions in the way of relationships and acquaintances that I made at Motiers. How many of these should I have needed to compensate me for the cruel losses I sustained during that same time!

The first of them was M. de Luxembourg, who after suffering long torment from the doctors at last fell a victim to them. For they treated his gout, which they refused to recognize, as a disease which they could cure. If we can trust the report written for me by La Roche, Madame's confidential servant, this was a cruel and memorable example of the miseries for which we must pity the great.

The loss of this good gentleman affected me the more because he was the only true friend I had in France; and the sweetness of his character was such that it made me altogether forget his rank and how fond of him, as of an equal. Our relationship did not end with my retirement; he continued to write to me as before. I seemed to perceive, however, that my absence or my misfortune had cooled his affection. It is very difficult for a courtier to preserve an unwavering attachment for someone whom he knows to be in disgrace with the authorities. I concluded besides that the great influence Mme de Luxembourg possessed over him had worked against me, and that she had profited by my absence to injure me in his eyes. She, in spite of some demonstrations of simulated friendship, which became steadily less frequent, took smaller pains every day to hide the change in her feelings towards me. She wrote to me four or five times, at intervals, while I was in Switzerland, and after that ceased writing; and it required all my prejudice in her favour, all my confidence, all the blindness in which I still persisted, for me not to see in her behaviour something more than a mere coolness towards me.

Guy the bookseller, who was Duchesne's partner, and since my time had been a constant visitor at the Hôtel de Luxembourg, wrote to me that I was remembered in the Marshal's will. I did not doubt his word, for there was nothing strange or incredible in that. But it made me deliberate what my attitude should be to the legacy. All things considered, I decided to accept it, whatever it might be, and so pay respect to an honourable man who, in a rank almost impervious

to friendship, had shown a true friendship to me. I have been relieved from this duty, having heard no more of this legacy, whether the tale was true or false; and indeed it would have pained me to violate one of my great moral principles, never to profit in any way by the death of anyone dear to me. During our friend Mussard's last illness, Lenieps proposed that I should take advantage of his evident gratitude for our care, and suggest that he should make some settlements in our favour: 'Ah, my dear Lenieps,' I answered, 'let us not pollute the sad but sacred duties we are performing for our dying friend by any thought of our own interest. I hope never to be mentioned in anyone's will, and certainly not in any friend's.' It was at about the same time that my Lord Marshal spoke to me of his will, and of the provision he intended to make for me in it. My answer to him I have recorded in the First Part of these *Confessions*.*

My second loss, a still more painful and more irreparable one, was that of the best of women and of mothers who, already burdened with years and overburdened with infirmities and miseries, left this vale of tears to pass to the abode of the blessed, where the pleasing memories of the good we have done here below is its own everlasting reward. Go, gentle and kindly soul, to join Fénélon, Bernex, Catinat, and all those like them who, in a humbler walk of life, have opened their hearts to true charity. Go, taste the fruit of your own good deeds, and prepare for your pupil the place that he hopes one day to occupy by your side! You are indeed fortunate amidst your misfortunes that by putting an end to them Heaven has spared you the cruel spectacle of his! Afraid of saddening her heart by the tale of my first disaster, I had not written to her since arriving in Switzerland. But I wrote to M. de Conzié for news of her, and it was he who informed me that she had ceased to suffer also. But if I did not think that I should see her again in another life, my feeble imagination would refuse to believe in the perfect happiness I hope there to enjoy.

My third and last loss – for since then I have had no friends left to lose – was that of my Lord Marshal. He did not die but, growing tired of serving an ungrateful people, he left Neuchâtel, and I have never seen him since. He is alive and will, I hope, survive me. He is alive and, thanks to him, all my ties upon earth are not broken. There still remains one man who is worthy of my friendship. For the true value of friendship lies rather in one's own feelings than in those which one inspires in another. But I have lost the delights that accrued to me from

[* In the Second Book.]

friendship, and now I can only reckon him among those whom I love, but with whom I am no longer in touch. He went to England to receive the King's pardon, and to redeem his estates, which had long ago been confiscated. We did not separate without planning a future meeting, to which he seemed to look forward with as much pleasure as I. He intended to settle in his mansion of Keith Hall, near Aberdeen, and I was to pay him a visit there. But this prospect was so unattractive for me to hope that it would ever be realized. He did not remain in Scotland. Affectionate entreaties from the King of Prussia brought him back to Berlin, and it will soon be seen how I was prevented from joining him there.

Before his departure, foreseeing the storm that was beginning to rage against me, he sent me of his own accord free letters of naturalization, which seemed a most certain safeguard against the possibility of my being expelled from the country. The Corporation of Couvet in the Val-de-Travers imitated the Governor's example and granted me a patent of citizenship, which was also free. So, now that I was a full citizen in every respect, I was safe from legal expulsion even at the hands of the Prince. But it has never been by legitimate means that enemies have persecuted that man who of all men has most respected the law.

I do not think that I should reckon the loss of Abbé de Mably among those that I sustained at that time. Having lived at his brother's, I had had some connexion with him, but never a very intimate one; and I have reason to think that his feelings for me had changed their nature since I had acquired more fame than he. But it was on the publication of the *Letters written from the Mountain* that I detected the first sign of his ill-will towards me. There was a letter to Mme Saladin circulating in Geneva, which was attributed to him, and in which my work was referred to as the seditious clamourings of a violent demagogue. The respect I felt for the Abbé and the high opinion I had of his learning forbade me to believe for a moment that this extravagant letter was by him. I acted in the matter as my frank nature dictated. I sent him a copy of the document, informing him that it was attributed to him. He did not make any reply. His silence astonished me. I cannot judge of my surprise when Mme de Chenonceaux sent me news that he had really written the letter, and that mine had greatly embarrassed him. For, after all, even if he had been in the right, how could he have excused a bold and public gesture made in sheer lightness of heart, without obligation or necessity, for the sole purpose of

crushing a man already deep in misfortune, a man to whom he had always shown goodwill and who had never proved unworthy of it? Some time afterwards appeared the *Dialogues of Phocion*, which I found to be a barefaced and shameless compilation from my own writings. I felt as I read the book that its author had made up his mind about me, and henceforth I had no bitterer enemy. I think that he could not forgive me *The Social Contract*, which was so far above his own powers, or the *Perpetual Peace*, and that he had only suggested that I should make a selection from the Abbé de Saint-Pierre because he had thought that I should not be successful with it.

The further I go in my story, the less order and sequence I can put into it. The disturbances of my later life have not left events time to fall into shape in my head. They have been too numerous, too confused, too unpleasant to be capable of straightforward narration. The only strong impression they have left me is that of the horrible mystery enveloping their cause, and of the deplorable state to which they have reduced me. Now my story can only proceed at haphazard, according as the ideas come back into my mind. I remember that during the time of which I am speaking, being immersed in my *Confessions*, I talked most rashly to everybody, never even imagining that anyone could have the interest or desire, and still less the power, to put any obstacle in the way of this enterprise. And even if I had thought otherwise, it is unlikely that I should have been more circumspect, since by nature I am absolutely incapable of concealing anything that I feel or think. News that I was so engaged was, so far as I can judge, the real cause of the storm which was raised for the purpose of expelling me from Switzerland and delivering me into the hands of those who would prevent my completing my task.

I had another project in contemplation which was viewed with hardly less disfavour by those who feared the first; and that was a definitive edition of my writings. This seemed to me necessary in order to establish which of the books bearing my name were really by me, and to enable the public to distinguish them from those pseudonymous writings fathered on me by my enemies in order to discredit me and lower my reputation. Furthermore, this edition would provide a simple and honest method of insuring myself a means of subsistence; and it was the only one I had. For I had abandoned the writing of books, and my memoirs could not be published during my lifetime. I did not earn a penny by any other trade, and was always spending. I could see the end of my resources therefore when the profits from

My last writings were exhausted. These considerations had forced me to publish my *Dictionary of Music* when it was still incomplete. It had brought me in a hundred *louis* in cash and an annuity of a hundred crowns. But it was not difficult to foresee that a hundred *louis* would soon be gone, when one spent more than sixty *louis* a year; and an income of a hundred crowns was nothing to a man on whom beggars and nonentities swooped down like starlings.

A company of Neuchâtel business men undertook the publication of my definitive edition, and a printer or bookseller from Lyons, by the name of Reguillat, managed somehow or another to thrust himself on them as manager. The agreement was made on reasonable terms, sufficiently generous to suit my purpose. I had, in works printed and in manuscript, enough to fill six quarto volumes. I further agreed to supervise the edition, in return for which I was to receive an annuity of sixteen hundred French *livres*, and a present of a thousand crowns down.

765 The agreement was concluded but not yet signed when the *Letters written from the Mountain* appeared. The appalling outburst against that infernal work and its abominable author alarmed the company, and the enterprise fell through. I should compare the effect of this work to that of the *Letter on French Music*, were it not that the latter, though it brought hatred upon me and exposed me to danger, at least left me consideration and esteem. But after the *Letters written from the Mountain* there seemed to be general astonishment in Geneva and Versailles that such a monster as I could be permitted to breathe. The Little Council, urged on by the French resident and instructed by the Prosecutor-General, issued a declaration against my book in which it was declared in the most outrageous terms that it was unworthy to be burnt by the public hangman, adding with an astuteness bordering on the comic, that it would be impossible for anyone to reply to it or so much as mention it without disgracing himself. I wish that I could insert a copy of this curious document; but unfortunately I do not possess one, and I cannot remember a single word of it. I sincerely hope that love of truth and justice may impel one of my readers to reread the *Letters written from the Mountain* from beginning to end. I venture to assert that he will then recognize the stoical moderation which pervades the whole work, after the cruel and violent outrages which people had vied with one another in heaping upon its author.

But being unable to answer my abuse, because it did not exist, nor my arguments, because they were unanswerable, they took the line of pretending to be too annoyed to deign a reply; and indeed if they mistook irrefutable arguments for abuse they must have considered themselves seriously aggrieved.

The Party of Liberty, far from protesting against this odious declaration, followed the path marked out for them in it. Instead of setting up the *Letters* as a trophy of victory, they covered them up to serve as a shield, and had the cowardice neither to honour nor to do justice, neither to quote nor to mention, a work written for their defence and at their request, although they silently drew all their arguments from it, and although their faithful observance of the advice with which that work concludes was the sole cause of their eventful salvation and their victory. They had imposed a duty upon me, and I had fulfilled it. I had served their country and their cause to the end. I implored them to abandon mine, and to think only of themselves in their quarrels. They took me at my word, and I have never interfered in their affairs again except ceaselessly to exhort them to make peace, for I did not doubt that if they persisted they would be crushed by France. That did not happen, and I know the reason. But this is not the place to relate it.

In Neuchâtel the effect of the *Letters written from the Mountain* was at first a very mild one. I sent a copy to M. de Montmollin, who accepted it with pleasure and read it without adverse criticism. He was ill, and so was I. He came and paid me a friendly call when he had recovered, and did not mention it. However the noise was beginning; somewhere or other* they burnt the book. From Geneva, from Berne, and perhaps from Versailles, the seat of the disturbance soon passed to Neuchâtel, and to the Val-de-Travers in particular, where, even before the clergy made any overt move, someone had already begun to whip up the mob by underhand means. I venture to think that the people of the district should have loved me as did those of every other place in which I had lived. I gave alms freely, never left any needy person in my neighbourhood without assistance, never refused anyone a service that I could perform and that was consistent with justice, was on familiar – and perhaps too familiar – terms with everybody and, so far as I was able, refused any distinction which might arouse jealousy. All this did not prevent the mob, secretly instigated by I know not whom, from gradually becoming incensed against me, and from

[* In Paris, together with Voltaire's *Philosophical Dictionary*.]

publicly insulting me in broad daylight, not only in the country and on the roads but in the open street. The most virulent were those to whom I had done most service; and even people I was still helping, although they did not venture to come forward in person, urged on the others, seemingly anxious thus to avenge themselves for the humiliation of being in my debt. Montmollin appeared to see nothing, and still did not show his hand. But as a Communion ceremony was almost due, he came and advised me not to present myself, assuring me, however, that he had nothing against me himself, and would leave me undisturbed. I found this a curious compliment. It reminded me of Mme de Boufflers' letter, and I could not imagine whom it could so affect whether I took Communion or not. As I considered that such compliance on my part would be an act of cowardice, and as, moreover, I did not wish to give the people a new excuse for accusing me of impiety, I refused the minister point-blank, and he went away in some annoyance, giving me to understand that I should repent of this.

He could not deny me Communion on his own sole authority. It needed that of the Consistory which had admitted me; and since the Consistory had said nothing I could boldly present myself without fear of being refused. Montmollin got the local conclave's authority to summon me before the Consistory, there to render an account of my belief, and to excommunicate me if I refused to appear. This excommunication, again, could only be pronounced by the Consistory and on a majority of votes. But the peasants who, under the style of Elders, made up this assembly, being presided over and, as may be supposed, swayed by their minister, could naturally have no other opinion than his, particularly in theological matters, which they understood still less than he. I was summoned, therefore, and I resolved to appear.

What a happy event and what a triumph it would have been for me if I had the power of speech; if, as one might say, my tongue had been my pen! With what superiority, with what ease would I have crushed that poor minister in front of his six peasants! Greed for authority having made the Protestant clergy forget all the principles of the Reformation, all that I needed, to remind him of this and reduce him to silence, was to explain my first *Letters written from the Mountain* on which they had been so foolish as to censure me. My text was ready to hand; I had only to enlarge upon it and my man was discomfited. I should not have been so foolish as to remain on the defensive; it

would have been easy for me to turn aggressive without his even noticing it or being able to protect himself. The little parsons in the conclave, who were as careless as they were ignorant, had themselves put me in the most favourable situation I could desire for crushing them when I chose. But then I should have had to speak, and speak without hesitation, to find ideas, and turns of phrase and words just when I needed them, always to keep my presence of mind, to remain cool, and never to be upset for a moment. What could I expect of myself when I knew so well how incapable I was of speaking impromptu? I had been reduced to the most humiliating silence at Geneva, before an assembly entirely favourable to me and already resolved to approve everything I said. Here, it was quite the opposite. I was dealing with a disparager, who used craft in place of knowledge and would lay me a hundred snares before I perceived one of them, a man determined to catch me out at all costs. The more I examined my position, the more dangerous it seemed. So, feeling the impossibility of extricating myself successfully, I lighted on another expedient. I thought out a speech to pronounce before the Consistory, challenging its authority and giving reason for refusing a reply. It was very easy. I wrote the speech and started learning it by heart with tremendous enthusiasm. Thérèse made fun of me when she heard me mumbling and incessantly repeating the same sentences, in my endeavours to get them into my head. I expected that I should know my speech in the end. I knew that the lord of the manor would be present at the Consistory as the Prince's representative, and that despite Montmollin's intrigues and his bottles of wine, the majority of the Elders were well disposed towards me. I had reason, truth, and justice on my side as well as the King's protection, the authority of the Council of State, and the good wishes of all honest patriots, who were affected by the setting-up of this inquisition. Everything combined to encourage me.

The day before the one appointed I knew my speech by heart; I recited it without a mistake. All night I went over it in my head, but in the morning I knew it no longer. I hesitated at every word, I felt myself already facing that illustrious assembly. I grew confused, I stammered, I lost my head. At last, when it was time to go, my courage completely failed me. I stayed at home, determined to write to the Consistory, hurriedly giving them my reasons and offering the excuse of my ailments which indeed, in the state I was then in, would hardly have allowed me to sit through a whole session.

The minister was embarrassed by my letter and put the matter off another session. Meanwhile he made every effort, both himself and through his creatures, to corrupt those of the Elders who followed the dictates of their own consciences rather than his, and were not in agreement with the clergy and himself. However powerful the arguments he drew from his wine-cellar were on people of this sort he could not win over anyone except the two or three who were already devoted to him, and who were called his 'damned souls'. The Prince's officer and Colonel de Pury – who acted most energetically in this matter – kept the rest to their duty; and when this Montmollin decided to proceed to the excommunication his Consistory, by a majority vote, vetoed him flatly. Reduced then to his last expedient of using the mob, he proceeded, with his fellow clergy and others, to work quite openly and with such success that, despite frequent and strongly worded injunctions from the King, and despite the orders of the Council of State, I was finally compelled to leave the country, in order not to expose the Prince's officer himself to the danger of being assassinated while defending me.

I have so confused a memory of this whole affair that it is impossible for me to impose any order or connexion on the ideas which come back to me. I can do no more than record them in the scattered and unrelated form in which they come to my mind. I remember that there were some sort of negotiations with the clergy, in which Montmollin acted as mediator. He pretended that people were afraid I should disturb the country's peace by my writings, for which the country would be held responsible.

He gave me to understand that if I promised to lay aside my pen, that was past would be forgotten. I had already made myself this promise, and I did not hesitate to make it to the clergy, but conditionally and only as regards matters of religion. He found a way of getting two copies of this document, on the pretext of some change he wanted in the wording. When my conditions were refused by the clergy I asked for my engagement back. He returned me one of the two copies and kept the other, on the excuse that he had lost it. After that the people, openly incited by the clergy, mocked at the royal injunctions and the order of the Council of State and became absolutely out of control. I was preached against from the pulpit, called Antichrist, and chased in the country as if I were a were-wolf. My Venetian costume made me a mark for the populace. I felt the disadvantages of it cruelly, but to abandon it in that situation seemed to

me cowardice. I could not make up my mind to do so, and walked calmly about the country in my caftan and my fur cap, pursued by the hoots of the mob and sometimes by stones. Several times when walking past the houses I heard people say inside: 'Bring me my gun, and I will shoot at him.' I did not hurry my pace, and this made them even more furious. But they always confined themselves to threats, at least in the matter of firearms.

During all this excitement I had nevertheless two pleasures for which I was very grateful. The first was that, through my Lord Marshal, I was able to perform an act of gratitude. All the respectable inhabitants of Neuchâtel were indignant at the treatment I was receiving and at the intrigues of which I was the victim. They were also highly incensed against the conclave, being well aware that the clergy were subject to foreign influences, and were merely the tools of other people who made them act while keeping themselves in the background. They were afraid, therefore, that my case might serve as a precedent for the establishment of a real inquisition. The magistrates, particularly M. Meuron, who had succeeded M. d'Ivernois in the post of Public Prosecutor, made every effort to defend me; and Colonel de Pury, although a private citizen, did even more, and with more success. It was he who found the means of defeating Montmollin in his own Consistory, by keeping the Elders to their duty. As he had some reputation, he used it to the utmost to check the disorder. But he had only the authority of law, justice, and reason with which to oppose that of money and wine. The match was unequal, and Montmollin therefore triumphed. Being grateful for his enthusiastic efforts on my behalf, however, I was anxious, if possible, to return him service for service, and in some way to discharge my obligations to him. I knew that he was most eager to become a Councillor of State. But his conduct in the case of the minister Petitpierre had displeased the Court, and he was out of favour with the Prince and the governor. I took the risk, nevertheless, of writing to my Lord Marshal on his behalf, and even ventured to mention the position he desired, to such good effect that, despite general expectations, it was almost immediately conferred on him by the King. So fate, which has always put me too high and too low at the same time, continued to toss me from one extreme to the other; and whilst the populace pelted me with muck, I was instrumental in appointing a Councillor of State.

My other great pleasure was a visit from Mme de Verdelin and her daughter, whom she had brought to the baths at Bourbonne, from

which she came on to Motiers and stayed with me for two or three days. By her attentions and care on my behalf she had finally conquered my long dislike of her; and my heart, overcome by her kindnesses, reciprocated all the friendship she had shown me for so long. I was touched by her visit, especially in my circumstances at that time when I greatly needed the consolation of friendship to keep up my courage. I was afraid that she might have been too much affected by the insults I received from the populace, and I should have liked to remove her from the sight of them, in order to spare her distress. But this I could not do; and although her presence somewhat restrained the jeers and taunts on our walks, she saw sufficient to judge what happened at other times. It was in fact during her stay that I began to be subject to continual attacks in my own house. One morning her lady's maid found a number of stones in front of my window that had been thrown down during the night. A very heavy bench, which stood in the street beside my porch, strongly fastened down, was torn up, moved, and set up on end against my door in such a way that if no one had been in it, the first person to open up and go out would have been blocked down. Mme de Verdelin knew all that went on. For, besides that she saw herself, her confidential servant got about the village, and talked to everybody. He was even seen in conversation with Montmollin. However, she seemed to pay no attention to anything that happened, spoke to me neither about Montmollin nor about anything else, and said very little in reply to what I sometimes said to her. I seemed to be convinced, however, that residence in England would suit me better than elsewhere, and talked to me a great deal about Mr Hume, who was then in Paris, about his friendship for me and his wish to be of service to me in his own country. It is time to say something of Mr Hume.*

He had earned a great reputation in France, and particularly among the Encyclopaedists, by his treatises on commerce and politics, and especially by his *History of the House of Stuart*, the only one of his works which I had read some part, in Abbé Prévost's translation. Not having read his other works, I considered from what I had heard of him that, though an extreme republican in spirit, he had at the same time the paradoxical English prejudice in favour of luxurious living. Thinking in this way, I looked on his whole apology for Charles I as a miracle of impartiality, and I had as high an opinion of his virtue

[David Hume (1711-76), Scottish philosopher, and afterwards Rousseau's friend in England.]

as of his genius. The wish to know this rare man and win his friendship had greatly increased my temptation to cross the Channel, which had been stimulated by the entreaties of his intimate friend, Mme de Boufflers. On my arrival in Switzerland I received from that lady a most flattering letter written to me by him, in which after praising my talents most highly he sent me a pressing invitation to come to England, offering to use all his influence and that of all his friends to make my stay a pleasant one. I went immediately to my Lord Marshal, Mr Hume's compatriot and friend, who confirmed my very high opinion of him, and told me a literary anecdote about him, which had greatly struck him, and which struck me too. Wallace, who had written against Hume on the subject of the population of the ancient world, was away when his work was printed. So Hume undertook to read the proofs and supervise the publication. That was conduct after my own heart. In the same spirit I had sold, at threepence each, copies of a song written against me. I was therefore strongly prejudiced in Hume's favour when Mme de Verdelin came and spoke glowingly of the friendship he claimed to feel for me, and of his eagerness to do me the honours of England – for those were the words she used. She urged me strongly to take advantage of his goodwill and to write to him. As I had no natural liking for England, and did not wish to adopt this course except in an extremity, I refused either to write or to make any promise. But I left her free to take any measures she thought fit, to keep Mr Hume favourably disposed towards me. On her departure from Motiers she left me persuaded, by everything that she told me about that famous man, that he was friendly towards me and still more a friend of hers.

After she had left Montmollin continued his intrigues, and the populace abandoned all restraint. I continued, however, quietly to take my walks to the accompaniment of their hooting; and my taste for botany, which I had begun to acquire from Doctor d'Ivernois, gave these walks a new interest. They sent me wandering the country in search of plants, unworried by the shouts of all that mob, who became even more infuriated by my coolness. One of the things which most affected me was to see the families of my friends* or of people

* This trouble had begun when I was staying at Yverdun. For when Roguin the Banneret died, a year or two after I left the town, old Papa Roguin was so honest as to tell me, with regret, that among his relative's papers had been found proofs that he had joined in the conspiracy to expel me from Yverdun and the State of Berne. This clearly proved that the plot was not, as they wished me to believe, a matter of religious cant. For Roguin the Banneret, far from

who claimed to be so, quite openly joining the ranks of my persecutors: among them the d'Ivernois, including even my dear Isabelle's father and brother; Boy de La Tour, a relation of the friend with whom I lodged; and Mme Girardier, her sister-in-law. This Pierre Boy was such an idiot, so stupid and so brutal in his behaviour that to save myself from flying out in a fury I took the liberty of ridiculing him, and wrote in the style of the *Little Prophet*, a small pamphlet of a few pages entitled *The Vision of Pierre of the Mountain, called the Seer*, in which I took the opportunity of light-heartedly attacking the miracles which at that time were the great pretext for my persecution. Du Peyrou had this trifle printed at Geneva, but it met with only moderate success in the district, the people of Neuchâtel, for all their intelligence, having little appreciation of Attic salt or humour, once it becomes at all subtle.

I devoted rather more care to another composition of this period, the manuscript of which will be found among my papers, and the subject of which I must here describe.

When the fury of decrees and persecutions was in full spate, the Genevese had particularly distinguished themselves by whooping in with all their strength; and my friend Vernes, among others, with a truly theological generosity chose this precise moment to publish some letters against me in which he claimed to prove that I was no Christian. These letters were none the better for the inflated style in which they were written, although it was definitely stated that Bonnet, the naturalist, had helped in their writing. For the said Bonnet, although a materialist, becomes nevertheless most intolerant in his orthodoxy the moment it has anything to do with me. I was most certainly not tempted to answer this work. But the occasion presenting itself to say a few words about it in my *Letters written from the Mountain*, I inserted a short and somewhat contemptuous note which put Vernes into a fury. His shouts of rage filled all Geneva, and d'Ivernois informed me that he was quite out of his mind. Some time later there appeared an anonymous pamphlet which seemed to have been written not in ink but in Phlegethon* water. In it I was accused of having exposed my children in the streets, of dragging a common whore

being a fervid churchman, carried his materialism and unbelief to the point of unatinal intolerance. Besides, no one at Yverdun had taken me up so completely, had made such a fuss of me with his praises and flatteries as this same Roguin. He was loyally following the favourite plan of my persecutors.

[* One of the rivers of the infernal regions.]

around with me, of being worn out by debauchery and rotten with pox, and treated with other similar politenesses. I did not find it difficult to recognize my man. My first reaction to this libellous document was to value all that men call renown and reputation at its true price. For here I saw one treated as a brothel-haunter who had never been inside a house of ill-fame in his life, and whose greatest fault had always been his virginal timidity and bashfulness; I was accused of being eaten up with pox when not only had I never in my life had the slightest attack of any such malady, but physicians even believed me to be so made as to be incapable of contracting it. After careful consideration I decided that I could not refute this libel better than by having it printed in the town in which I had lived longest. So I sent it to Duchesne to be published just as it was, with a foreword in which I mentioned M. Vernes, and with some short notes to explain the facts. Not content with having this pamphlet printed, however, I sent it to several people, among others to Prince Louis of Wurtemberg, who had made most courteous approaches to me and with whom I was then in correspondence. The Prince, Du Peyrou, and others seemed to doubt whether Vernes was the author of the libel and blamed me for having too frivolously introduced his name. Their remonstrances aroused scruples in me, and I wrote to Duchesne to suppress the pamphlet. Guy wrote to tell me that this had been done. But I do not know whether it was true, since I have found him lying on so many occasions that one more would not be surprising; and from that moment I was shrouded in darkness so profound and impenetrable that it is impossible for me to get at any sort of truth.

M. Vernes bore my imputation with an equanimity which would have been more than astonishing in a man who did not deserve it, especially considering the fury he had displayed hitherto. He wrote me two or three very carefully worded letters whose purpose, as it seemed to me, was to discover from my answers just how much I knew, and whether I had any proofs against him. I wrote him two short and cold replies, severely phrased but perfectly polite in their language, and he did not get at all annoyed. When his third letter arrived I saw that he was trying to start some kind of correspondence and did not reply to it. He then asked d'Ivernois to speak to me. Mme Cramer wrote to Du Peyrou that she was sure the pamphlet was not by Vernes. None of this shook my conviction. But as, after all, I could be mistaken, and as in that case I owed Vernes an explicit apology, I sent him a message by d'Ivernois that I would make him one which

would amply satisfy him, if he could tell me the real author of the libel, or at least prove to me that it was not he. I went further; conscious that, after all, if he was not guilty I had no right to require of him that he should prove anything, I resolved to set out in a far longer memoir the reasons for my belief and to submit them to the decision of an umpire to whom Vernes could not take exception. No one would guess the umpire I chose: it was the Council of Geneva. I declared at the end of this memoir that if, after having examined it and made such inquiries as it should think necessary – which it was in a good position to do with success – the Council should declare that Vernes was not the author of the libel, from that moment I would sincerely renounce my belief that he was, would go and throw myself at his feet, and continue to beg for his pardon until I received it. I dare affirm that never did my burning desire for impartiality, never did uprightness or the generosity of my soul, never did my confidence in that spirit of justice innate in every heart, show themselves more plainly, more palpably than in that wise and affecting memoir in which I unhesitatingly chose my most implacable enemies as arbitrators between my libeller and myself. I read this composition to Du Peyrou, who advised me to suppress it, and I did so. He counselled me to wait for the proofs that Vernes promised me; I waited, and I am waiting still. He counselled me to keep silence in the meantime; I was silent and I shall be silent for the rest of my life under the imputation of having brought against Vernes a serious, false, and unproven charge, though I remain as firmly convinced and persuaded in my heart as I am of my own existence that he is the author of the libel. My memoir is in M. Du Peyrou's possession. If ever it sees the light my reasons will be found in it, and the heart of Jean-Jacques, which my contemporaries have been so unwilling to recognize, will then, I hope, be understood.

It is time to come to my catastrophe at Motiers and to my departure from the Val-de-Travers after a residence of two and a half years, and after eight months of unshakeable firmness in the face of the most humiliating treatment. I find it impossible clearly to remember the details of that unpleasant era. But they will be found in the account published by Du Peyrou of which I shall have to speak later.

After Mme de Verdelin's departure the excitement became more violent, and despite the King's repeated injunctions, despite frequent orders from the Council of State, despite the precautions of the lord of the manor and the local magistrates, the people, seriously regarding

me as Antichrist, and finding all their clamour ineffective, seemed at last about to resort to violence. Already stones bounced after me on the roads, thrown from rather too far off to hit me. Finally, on the night of the Motiers fair, which is at the beginning of September, I was attacked in my home in such a way as to endanger the lives of its inhabitants.

At midnight I heard a loud noise in the gallery which ran along the back of the house. A hail of stones thrown against the window and the door which gave on to this gallery had fallen with such a clatter that my dog, who slept in the gallery and who had begun to bark, was silent with fright and rushed into a corner, where he gnawed and scratched at the boards in his endeavour to escape. I was roused by the noise, and was just about to leave my room to visit the kitchen when a stone flung by a powerful hand smashed the kitchen window, flew across the room, broke open the door of my bedroom and fell at the foot of my bed, so that if I had been a second quicker it would have hit me in the stomach. I concluded that the noise had been made to rouse me, and the stone thrown to catch me as I came out. I rushed into the kitchen, where I found Thérèse, who had also got up and ran trembling towards me. We stood against the wall out of the line of the window, to avoid being hit by the stones, and to consider what we should do. For if we had run out to call for help we should have been stoned to death. Fortunately the maidservant of an old fellow who lived below me was woken by the noise and ran to call the lord of the manor, who lived next door. He jumped out of bed, hastily put on his dressing-gown, and instantly came with the watch, which was on patrol that night on account of the fair, and happened to be near. So shocked was the lord of the manor by the spectacle of the damage that he turned quite pale; and when he saw the quantity of stones in the gallery he cried: 'Good God, it's an absolute quarry!' On inspecting the lower floor they found that the door into a small courtyard had been forced, and that somebody had tried to get into the house through the gallery. On their inquiring why the watch had neither noticed nor prevented the tumult, it was discovered that the Motiers men had insisted on doing duty that night although it was another village's turn. The next day the lord of the manor sent his report to the State Council, who sent him orders two days later to investigate the affair, and to offer a reward under promise of secrecy to anyone informing against the guilty parties. In the meantime he was to put a guard at the Prince's expense on my house and on his own, which

adjoined it. The next day Colonel de Pury, Meuron the public prosecutor, Martinet the lord of the manor, Guyenet the collector of taxes, d'Ivernois the treasurer, and his father, in short all the important men in the district paid me a visit, and all together begged me to yield to the storm and, at least temporarily, to leave a parish in which I could no longer live in safety and honour. I saw that even M. Martinet was terrified by the frenzied fury of the populace and afraid that it might be turned against him too. I knew that he would be glad to see me depart immediately, so that he might be relieved of the difficulty of protecting me, and could leave the place himself, which he did as soon as I departed. I gave in, therefore, and I took very little persuading; for the spectacle of the people's hatred caused me such anguish that it was more than I could bear.

I had more than one place of retreat open to me. Since her return to Paris, Mme de Verdelin had mentioned in several of her letters a Mr Walpole, whom she called Milord, who showed great concern for me, and offered me a refuge on one of his estates, of which she sent me the most attractive description, entering into such details in regard to board and lodging that I could see how interested she and this Lord Walpole were in the proposition. My Lord Marshal had always advised me to go to England or Scotland, and had also offered me a home on his estates, but he offered me an alternative which tempted me far more, at Potsdam, not far from his residence. He had just informed me of a suggestion that the King had made on my behalf, and which almost amounted to an invitation; and the Duchess of Saxe-Gotha felt so sure that I should accept that she wrote pressing me to visit her on my way, and to spend some time with her. But I was so fond of Switzerland that I could not make up my mind to leave it so long as it was possible to live there; and I took this opportunity to carry out a plan which I had been considering for several months, but which I have not yet been able to mention, for fear of interrupting the thread of my story.

This plan was to go and settle on the island of Saint-Pierre, which belonged to the hospital of Berne and lay in the middle of the lake of Bienne. I had visited the island on a walking tour that I had made in the previous summer with Du Peyrou; and I had been so enchanted with it that from that moment I had thought continuously about some way of setting up house there. The greatest obstacle was that the island belonged to the Bernese, who had disgracefully driven me from their territory three years before; and not only did it hurt my pride

to go back among people who had given me such a bad reception, but I had reason to fear that they would allow me no more peace on that island than they had at Yverdun. I had consulted my Lord Marshal on the point; and he thought, as I did, that the Bernese would be delighted to see me banished to that island, and to hold me there as a hostage for any further works I might be tempted to write. He had sounded them on the subject through a M. Sturler, his former neighbour at Colombier. M. Sturler made inquiries from various leading officials and, on the basis of their replies, assured my Lord Marshal that the Bernese were ashamed of their past conduct, and would be most delighted to see me living on the island on Saint-Pierre, where they would leave me in peace. As an additional precaution, before I risked taking up residence there, I made fresh inquiries through Colonel Chaillet, who confirmed these assurances. So when the receiver of taxes for the island obtained his principals' permission to receive me into his house, I considered that I was taking no risk in going to stay there, with the tacit consent both of the authorities and the owners. For I could not suppose that the gentlemen of Berne would publicly acknowledge the injustice they had done me, and so offend against the most inviolable principles of all rulers.

The island of Saint-Pierre, known in Neuchâtel as the *Île de la Motte*, lies in the middle of the Lake of Bienne and is about a mile and a half in circumference. But in that small space it produces all the chief necessities for existence. It has fields, meadows, orchards, woods, vineyards; and all this, thanks to the diversified and hilly nature of the ground, provides a most pleasing variety of landscape. For its different parts, which cannot all be seen at the same time, form a pleasing contrast to one another, and make the island seem larger than it really is. The western part, which looks over to Gleresse and Bonneville, is formed by a very high terrace. This has been planted with a long avenue, broken in the middle by a large hall in which all the inhabitants of the neighbouring shores gather on Sundays during the grape harvest to dance and enjoy themselves. There is only one house on the island, where the receiver lives. But it is large and comfortable, and situated in a hollow which protects it from the wind.

Five or six hundred yards to the south of the island is another, much smaller, which is uncultivated and uninhabited, and appears to have been broken away at some time from the larger one by storms. Its gravelly soil produces nothing but willows and persicaria; it has, however, one considerable eminence, which is grassy and very pleasant.

The shape of the lake is almost a regular oval. Its shores are less fertile than those of the lakes of Geneva or Neuchâtel, but form, all the same, a most decorative landscape, particularly on the western side, which is thickly inhabited and edged with vineyards lying at the foot of a chain of mountains, very much as at Côte-Rôtie,* though they do not give as good wine. Going from south to north one passes through the townships of Saint-Jean, Bonneville, Bienne, and Nidau, which last is at the end of the lake, and between them lie some very pleasant villages.

Such was the retreat that I had contrived for myself, and in which I resolved to settle on leaving the Val-de-Travers.† This choice was so much in keeping with my peaceful tastes and with my solitary, indolent disposition, that I think of it as one of those sweet dreams for which I have felt the most enthusiasm. It seemed to me that on that island I should be further removed from men, safer from their insults, and more forgotten by them; freer, in a word, to surrender to the pleasures of idleness and the contemplative life. I should have liked to be so cut off on that island as to have no more traffic with mortal men; and I certainly took every possible precaution to excuse myself from the necessity of any intercourse with them.

The question was how to live; and the high price of provisions and the difficulties of transport made living dear on the island, where one is, moreover, at the mercy of the receiver. This difficulty was solved by an arrangement which Du Peyrou was so kind as to make with me, whereby he took over the obligations of the company which had undertaken and abandoned the publication of my complete works. I gave him all the necessary materials, and myself undertook the arrangements and the distribution. I also agreed to hand him the memoirs of my life, and I made him general trustee for all my papers, under the express condition that he should make no use of them till after my death, since I had set my heart on ending my days in peace and giving the public no further reminder of my existence. The annuity which he promised to pay me in return for this was enough for me to live on. My Lord Marshal, who had recovered all his property, offered me a

* Vineyards on the Rhône.

† It is perhaps worth mentioning that I left a special enemy behind me, a M. du Terraux, mayor of Verrières, who was not much respected in his district, but who has a brother, said to be an honourable man, in M. de Saint-Florentin's office. The mayor had paid him a visit some time before my adventures. Slight observations of this kind, which are nothing in themselves, are capable of subsequently leading to the discovery of much underground plotting.

further 1200 francs a year, only half of which I accepted. He wanted to send me the capital, which I refused, having no idea how to invest it. He, therefore, handed the sum over to Du Peyrou, in whose hands it has remained, and who has paid me the annuity on the terms agreed between himself and the donor. Reckoning the proceeds of my agreement with Du Peyrou, my Lord Marshal's pension – of which two-thirds would revert to Thérèse after my death – and the annual sum of three hundred francs which I received from Duchesne, I could count on a decent subsistence for myself and, after me, for Thérèse, to whom I left an income of 700 francs, from Rey's pension together with my Lord Marshal's. So I had no longer any cause to fear that she would lack for bread any more than I. But it was decreed that I should be compelled by honour to reject all the resources that fortune and my own labours brought within my reach, and that I should die as poor as I had lived. The reader shall judge whether without sinking to the lowest depths of infamy I could have adhered to arrangements deliberately designed to humiliate me, by people who have each time carefully deprived me of all other resources, in order to compel me to consent to my dishonour. How could they have been in any doubt as to the choice I should make in this dilemma? They have always judged my heart by their own.

My mind being at rest so far as my livelihood was concerned, I felt no other anxiety. Although I abandoned the field of the world to my enemies, I left in the noble enthusiasm which had inspired my writings and in the steadfastness with which I had adhered to my principles a testimony to my qualities of soul, corresponding to that which my whole conduct adduced to my natural qualities. I had no need of any other defence against my calumniators. They could draw another man and give him my name, but they could only deceive those who wished to be deceived. I could leave them my life to criticize from one end to the other, in the certainty that, notwithstanding my faults and weaknesses, notwithstanding my inability to tolerate any yoke, they would always find me a just and good man, free from bitterness, hatred, and jealousy, quick to recognize when I was in the wrong, even quicker to excuse the injustices of others, seeking my happiness always in the gentle emotion of loving, and behaving on all occasions with a sincerity verging upon rashness and with a disinterestedness that was almost past belief.

I was in a manner, therefore, taking leave of my age and my contemporaries and, by confining myself to that island for the rest of my

fe, was bidding the world farewell. For such was my intention, and was there that I meant at last to carry out my great scheme for a life of idleness, to which I had hitherto fruitlessly devoted the slight activities which Heaven had allotted me. This island was going to be my *apinamia*,* the happy land of sleep.

But one does more than that there, one does nothing.

That *more* was everything to me, for I have never regretted my sleeplessness. Idleness is enough for me and, provided I do nothing, I prefer to dream waking than sleeping. The age for romantic plans was past. I had found the incense of vainglory stupefying rather than enlivening. So the last hope I had left was to live without restraints and eternally at leisure. Such is the life of the blessed in the other world, and henceforth I thought of it as my supreme felicity in this.

Those who reproach me for my many inconsistencies will not fail to reproach me for this one too. I have said that the idleness of society made it unbearable to me; and here I am, seeking for solitude solely in order to give myself up to idleness. However, that is how I am; if there is any contradiction it is of Nature's making, not mine. But it is such a trifling one that it is the very mark of my consistency. The idleness of society is deadly because it is obligatory; the idleness of solitude is delightful because it is free and voluntary. In company it is torture to do nothing, because there I am compelled to inaction. I have to stay glued to a chair, or stand at my post like a sentinel, without stirring hand or foot, and without the courage either to run, leap, sing, shout, or wave my arms when I want to. I dare not even dream. I suffer at once all the boredom of idleness and all the torments of constraint, being compelled to pay attention to every silly thing that is said and to every compliment that is paid, and incessantly to tease my companion so as not to lose my turn to bring in a pun or a fib. And you call that idleness! It is the labour of a galley-slave.

The idleness I love is not that of an indolent fellow who stands with folded arms in perfect inactivity, and thinks as little as he acts. It is the idleness of a child who is incessantly on the move without ever doing anything, and at the same time it is the idleness of a rambling old man whose mind wanders while his arms are still. I love to busy myself about trifles, to begin a hundred things and not finish one of them, to come and go as my fancy bids me, to change my plan every moment, to follow a fly in all its circlings, to try and uproot a rock to see what

[* A name invented by Rabelais for the retreat of the Papal court.]

is underneath, eagerly to begin on a ten-years task and to give it up after ten minutes: in short, to fritter away the whole day inconsequentially and incoherently, and to follow nothing but the whim of the moment.

Botany – as I had always considered it and as I still did when it began to become a passion with me – was exactly the kind of idle pursuit to fill the void of my leisure, leaving no room for the wildness of the imagination or for the boredom of total inaction. To wander carelessly through the woods and fields, and mechanically to pluck here and there, sometimes a flower and sometimes a branch, to munch my fodder almost haphazard, to observe the same things thousands and thousands of times and always with the same interest, because I always forgot them each time: that was the way to pass eternity without the possibility of a moment's boredom. However shapely, however wonderful, however various the structure of plants may be, it never strikes an ignorant eye sufficiently hard to interest it. The constant similarity, and at the same time the prodigious variety, that obtains in their composition only affects those who have some knowledge of the vegetable world. Others, when they look at all these treasures of nature, feel only a stupid and monotonous admiration. They see nothing in its detail, because they do not even know what they ought to look at; and they fail equally to see the whole, because they have no idea of that chain of relations and combinations, which is so marvellous that it overwhelms the observer's mind. I was, owing to my poor memory, always fated to remain in that happy state of knowing little enough for everything to be fresh to me, and yet quite enough for me to find it intelligible. The different soils that occurred on this island, tiny though it was, offered me a sufficient variety of plants for study and amusement for the rest of my life. I wanted to leave no single blade of grass unclassified, and I was already preparing to compile the *Flora Petrinsularis*, together with a huge collection of curious observations.

I sent for Thérèse to bring my books and belongings. We boarded with the receiver of the island. His wife had sisters at Nidau who came to visit her by turns, and they were company for Thérèse. Here I had my first experience of a pleasant life in which I could have wished to continue for the rest of my days. But the taste I got for it only served to make me feel more keenly the bitterness of the life which was so quickly to succeed it.

I have always been passionately fond of the water. The sight of it

throws me into a delicious dream, although often about no definite subject. On getting up I never failed, if it was fine, to run out to the terrace and breathe in the fresh and healthy morning air, and to let my eyes skim along the horizon of that beautiful lake whose shores and whose skirt of mountains delighted my gaze. I can think of no more fitting homage to the Divinity than the silent wonder aroused by the contemplation of His works, which is not to be expressed by any external acts. I can understand how it is that city-dwellers, who see only walls and streets and crimes, have so little religion. But I cannot understand how those who live in the country, and the solitary especially, can be lacking in faith. How is it that their souls are not raised in ecstasy a hundred times a day to the Author of the wonders that strike their eyes? In my case, it is especially on rising, exhausted by insomnia, that a long-standing habit induces those upliftings of the heart which require none of the weary effort of thought. But for this, my eyes have to be struck by the ravishing spectacle of Nature. In my room I pray less often and with less fervour; but at the sight of a beautiful landscape I feel moved, though I cannot say by what. I have read of a wise bishop who, on touring his diocese, met an old woman whose sole prayer consisted of the exclamation 'O!' 'Good mother,' said he, 'go on praying like that always. Your prayer is better than ours.' That better prayer is also mine.

After breakfast I hastily and grudgingly wrote a few miserable letters, eagerly longing for the happy moment when I should have no more to write. I would then fidget among my books and papers for a few moments, rather for the purpose of unpacking and arranging them than of reading; and this, which became a Penelope's task to me, afforded me the pleasure of a few minutes' idleness, at the end of which I tired of it and left it, to spend the three or four hours of the morning remaining to me in studying botany, and especially the system of Linnaeus, for whom I conceived a passion that I have never been able entirely to throw off, even after discovering its deficiencies. That great observer is, in my opinion, the only man so far, except for Ludwig, who has looked at botany with the eyes of a scientist and a philosopher. But he has studied too much from gardens and collections of dried plants, and not enough from Nature herself. For my part, taking the whole island as my garden, as soon as I needed to make or verify any observation I ran into the woods or the fields with my book under my arm; and there I lay down beside the plant in question to examine it as it grew and at my leisure. This method has

greatly assisted me in acquiring a knowledge of plants in their natural state, before they have been cultivated and deformed by the hand of man. It is said that Fagon, Louis XIV's first physician, who could name and perfectly recognize every plant in the Royal Gardens, was so ignorant in the country that he could not identify anything. I am exactly the opposite; I know something about Nature's handiwork but nothing about the gardener's.

In the afternoons I gave myself up entirely to my lazy and nonchalant humour, and unsystematically followed the impulse of the moment. Often when the weather was calm I went off alone immediately on leaving table and, jumping into a little boat that the receiver had taught me to manage with a single oar, rowed out into the open lake. The moment I left the bank I almost leapt for joy. The cause of this I cannot tell, nor can I really understand it, unless it was perhaps some secret self-congratulation at being thus out of reach of the wicked. Then I rowed alone all about the lake, sometimes approaching the shore but never landing. Often, letting my boat drift with the wind and the current, I gave myself up to aimless dreams which, foolish though they were, were none the less delightful. Sometimes I cried out with emotion: 'O Nature! O my mother! I am here under your sole protection. Here there is no cunning and rascally man to thrust himself between us.' In this way I would drift almost a mile and a half from land; and I could have wished that lake were the ocean. However, to please my poor dog, who was not so fond as I of long afternoons on the water, I generally followed a settled plan. I would go and land on the little island, walk there for an hour or two; or lie down on top of its grassy hill to glut myself with the joy of gazing on the lake and its surroundings, or to examine and dissect all the grasses within my reach, or to build, like another Robinson Crusoe, an imaginary dwelling on this little isle. I was extremely fond of that hillock. How proud I was to act as pilot and guide when I was able to bring Thérèse with the receiver's wife and her sisters to take a walk there! We solemnly transported some rabbits to stock the place; which was another red-letter day for Jean-Jacques. This colony made the little island even more interesting to me. I went more often and with greater pleasure after that, to look for signs of the new inhabitants' progress.

To these amusements I added another, which recalled the delightful life at Les Charmettes; and which was most suitable to the season. This was assisting in the country labours of bringing in the vegetables and

it, a job in which Thérèse and I were delighted to take our share with the receiver's wife and her family. I remember that when a M. Archberger from Berne came to see me he found me perched in a large tree with a sack tied to my waist, and already so loaded with apples that I could not move. I was not at all sorry that he and others could find me thus employed. I hoped that when the Bernese saw how I spent my leisure they would no longer think of troubling my quiet life and would leave me at peace in my solitude. I should have preferred to be confined to my island by their will than by my own. Or then I should have been more certain of not having my rest disturbed.

Here is one more of these confessions which I am certain in advance will meet with the incredulity of those readers who always persist in judging me by their own standards, although they cannot have helped seeing, throughout the course of my life, countless inner emotions of mine utterly unlike their own. The most extraordinary thing is that while denying me all those feelings, good or indifferent, which they do not themselves possess, they are always ready to attribute others to me so wicked that they could not even enter into a man's heart. They find it quite simple to make me out as an exception to Nature's laws, and to depict me as such a monster as cannot possibly even exist. Nothing seems too absurd for them to believe so long as it tends to weaken my character; nothing at all out of the way seems to them possible if it redounds to my honour.

But whatever they may think or say, I shall continue just the same truthfully to reveal what J.-J. Rousseau was, did, and thought, without explaining or justifying the strangeness of his feelings or ideas, or inquiring whether any others have thought like him. I took such a fancy to the Island of Saint-Pierre, and living on it suited me so well, that by dint of concentrating all my desires within that island, I conceived the further desire of never leaving it. The visits which I had to pay in the neighbourhood, the expeditions which I should have made to Neuchâtel, to Bienne, to Yverdun, and to Nidau already wearied me in anticipation. A day to be spent off the island seemed the loss of many hours' happiness; and to leave the circle of the lake was for me to go out of my element. Besides, past experience had made me fearful. No sooner did something warm my heart than I expected to lose it; and my burning desire to end my days on the island was inseparably bound up with the fear of being expelled from it. I had got the habit of going in the evenings to sit on the shore, especially when

the lake was rough. It gave me a strange pleasure to watch the waves break at my feet. I made them a symbol of the tumult of the world and of the contrasted peacefulness of my home; and so moved was I at times by this delightful thought that I felt the tears flow from my eyes. This repose, which I so passionately enjoyed, was only disturbed by the fear of losing it; but my feeling of uneasiness was so great as quite to spoil its charm. I felt my situation to be so precarious that I dared not count on it. 'How gladly', I used to say to myself, 'would I exchange my liberty to leave this place for the assurance that I could always remain here. Instead of being allowed to stay here as a favour, why am I not kept here by force! The men who leave me here on sufferance may at any moment drive me away. How can I hope that when my persecutors see me happy they will let me continue to be so? It is little enough that they allow me to live here. I should like to be condemned, I should like to be forced to stay here, so that I may never be compelled to leave.' I envied the good fortune of Micheli Ducret,* at peace in his castle of Arberg, who had only to wish for happiness and he was happy. In the end, from constantly giving myself over to these reflections and to the disturbing presentiments of new storms always about to break over me, I came to wish with extraordinary fervour that instead of only tolerating my residence upon the island, the Bernese would make it my prison for life; and I can swear that if it had only rested with me to secure my condemnation I should have done so most joyfully, since I infinitely preferred the necessity of spending the rest of my life there to the danger of being driven away.

My fears did not remain for long unfulfilled. At the moment when I least expected it I received a letter from the governor of Nidau, in whose jurisdiction the island of Saint-Pierre lay, in which he communicated to me on behalf of Their Excellencies the order to leave the island and their territory. I thought I was dreaming as I read it. Nothing could have been less natural, more unreasonable, or less to be foreseen than such an order; for I had looked on my forebodings rather as the fears of a man alarmed by his misfortunes than as a presentiment that could have the least foundation. The precautions I had taken to make sure of the government's tacit consent; the visits of several Bernese and of the governor himself, who had overwhelmed me with friendliness and attentions; the hard weather in which it was barbarous to expel a sick man: everything made me and many other people believe that there was some irregularity about the order, and

[* See above, Book Five.]

that those ill-disposed towards me had deliberately chosen the time of harvest, when meetings of the Senate were few, to deal me this sudden blow.

If I had followed my first indignant impulse I should have left on the spot. But where was I to go? What would become of me at the beginning of winter, without any plan or preparations, without any conveyance or guide? Unless I were to leave everything in confusion, my papers, my possessions, and all my affairs, I needed time to see to them; and it was not mentioned in the order whether time was granted or not. The persistence of my misfortunes was beginning to sap my courage. For the first time I felt my natural pride bending beneath the yoke of necessity, and despite the protests of my heart I had to humiliate myself and ask for some respite. It was to M. Graffenried, who had sent me the order, that I turned for an explanation of it. His letter had revealed very strong disapproval of this same order, which he had only conveyed to me with the greatest regret; and the evidence of his sympathy and esteem, of which the letter was full, seemed to me like a kindly invitation on his part to speak to him frankly. This I did. I felt quite certain indeed that my letter would open the eyes of those unjust men to their barbarous conduct, and that if this cruel order were not revoked I should at least be allowed a reasonable respite, perhaps the whole winter, in which to prepare for my departure and choose another place of refuge.

While waiting for a reply, I began to reflect on my situation, and to consider what course of action I should follow. I saw so many difficulties on every side, my sorrows had so affected me, and my health at that moment was so bad, that I allowed myself to break down entirely; and the effect of my prostration was to deprive me of the few resources which might possibly still remain in my head for extricating myself from my melancholy situation in the most efficient way. No matter what place I might choose for a refuge, I nearly could not safeguard myself against either of the two methods which had been used to expel me, the first of inciting the population against me by underground intrigues, and the second of expelling me by naked force without offering any reasons. I could not, therefore, count on any safe retreat unless I were to go much further than my strength or the season seemed to allow. All this brought me back to the ideas that had just been preoccupying me; and I ventured to put forward my wish that they should keep me in perpetual captivity rather than send me as a ceaseless wanderer over the face of the earth,

expelled from every refuge I might choose, one after another. Two days after my first letter I wrote M. de Graffenried again, asking him to put this proposal before Their Excellencies. The reply from Berne to both these letters was an order, couched in the most formal and severe language, to leave the island and all territory belonging directly or indirectly to the Republic within the space of twenty-four hours and never to return, under pain of grievous penalties.

It was a terrible moment. I have found myself since in worse anguish but never in greater difficulties. But what most distressed me was to be forced to give up the scheme by which I had planned to spend the winter on the island. It is time to relate the fatal incident which came as a crowning disaster, and dragged after me to their ruin an unfortunate people, whose budding virtues already promised one day to equal those of Sparta and of Rome. I had spoken of the Corsicans in *The Social Contract* as an unspoiled people, the only people in Europe which was not ruined by legislation; and I had observed what great hopes might be placed in such a people if they should be so fortunate as to find a wise instructor. My work was read by some Corsicans who appreciated the respectful terms in which I had spoken of them; and it occurred to their chief men who were working for the establishment of a republic to ask my advice about the task on which they were engaged. A M. Buttafuoco, a member of one of the leading families of the island and a captain in the French Royal Italian Regiment, wrote to me on the subject, and provided me with several documents for which I had asked, that would give me information about the history of the Corsicans and the state of their country. M. Paoli* also wrote to me several times; and although I felt such an enterprise to be beyond my strength, I did not think that I could refuse my assistance in so great and noble a task, once I had obtained all the necessary information I required. It was to this effect that I answered them both, and our correspondence continued until my departure.

Precisely at this moment I learnt that France was sending troops to Corsica and had made a treaty with the Genoese. Both the treaty and the despatch of troops disturbed me; and although I did not yet imagine that all this had anything to do with me, I concluded that it would be absurd and impossible to work on a project requiring such complete tranquillity as the organization of a people, at a moment

[* Pascalo Paoli (1726-1807), one of the Corsican leaders, who died in exile in London.]

when they were perhaps on the point of being subjugated. I did not conceal my concern from M. Buttafuoco, who calmed me by the assurance that if there were any clauses in the treaty which compromised the freedom of his people, a good citizen like himself would not remain, as he was, in the French service. Indeed his zeal for a Corsican constitution and his close connexion with M. Paoli made it impossible for me to suspect his attitude; and when I learnt that he made frequent journeys to Versailles and to Fontainebleau and that he was in touch with M. de Choiseul, I merely concluded that he had assurances as to the true intentions of the French Court which he would tell me by word of mouth, but which he did not care boldly to set out in letters.

All this partially reassured me. However, being still quite unable to understand the despatch of French troops, or reasonably to suppose that they were there to defend Corsican liberty, which the Corsicans were perfectly capable of defending against the Genoese without assistance, I could not set my mind completely at rest, or seriously concern myself with the proposed constitution, until I had solid proof that the whole thing was not a joke at my expense. I should very much have liked an interview with M. Buttafuoco, the only real way of getting the explanations which I wanted. He held out hopes, and looked forward to a meeting with the greatest impatience. I do not know whether he, for his part, seriously intended to meet me. But even if he had my disasters would have prevented my taking advantage of any opportunity.

The more I thought over the proposed undertaking and the more closely I examined the documents that had been sent me, the more I felt the necessity of studying on the spot the people to be legislated for, the soil they inhabited, and all the circumstances governing the application of new laws to the Corsicans. Every day I was more conscious that I could not acquire at a distance all the knowledge I needed to guide me. I told Buttafuoco this by letter, he realized it himself, and though I did not exactly decide to go to Corsica I thought a good deal about ways of making the journey. I spoke of it to M. Dastier, who had once served on the island under M. de Maillebois, and so of course knew it. He did all he could to dissuade me from the idea; and I admit that the frightful picture of the Corsicans and their country that he drew for me greatly tempered my desire to go and live among them.

But when my persecution at Motiers made me think of leaving

Switzerland, this desire was rekindled by the hope of finding at last among the islanders the tranquillity that was denied me everywhere. Only one thing about this journey alarmed me: my unfitness for the active life to which I should be condemned, and the aversion I had always felt towards it. I was formed to meditate at leisure and in solitude, but not to speak, act, and do business amongst men. Nature, in endowing me with the former capacities, had denied me the latter. I felt, however, that without taking a direct part in public affairs I should be compelled, as soon as I landed in Corsica, to yield to popular pressure and to hold frequent conferences with the leaders. The very object of my voyage required that, instead of seeking retirement, I should gather the information I needed from amongst the people themselves. It was clear that I should no longer be my own master; that I should be dragged despite myself into a vortex for which I was unfitted; that in it I should lead a life quite contrary to my inclinations, and should always show myself at a disadvantage. I foresaw that in the flesh I should disappoint the expectations of my capabilities which the Corsicans had probably formed from my books; that I should discredit myself in their eyes, as much to their detriment as to my own; and that I should lose the confidence they had placed in me, without which I could not successfully carry out the task they expected of me. I was certain that by thus departing from my own sphere, I should become useless to them, and make myself unhappy.

A tortured creature, battered by every kind of storm, and wearied by many years of travelling and persecutions, I strongly felt the need of that repose which my savage enemies denied me for their own amusement. More than ever did I sigh for that delightful idleness, for that sweet repose of body and spirit, which I had coveted so dearly and in which, cured now of my desire for love and friendship, I knew my sole and supreme felicity to be. I could envisage with nothing but apprehension the labours I was about to undertake and the tumultuous life to which I should be abandoning myself; and though the greatness, the beauty, and usefulness of the cause gave me some encouragement, the impossibility of successfully taking a personal part in it completely sapped me of strength. Twenty years of profound and solitary meditation would have cost me less than six months of active life among men and affairs, with the certainty of failure at the end of it.

I thought of an expedient which seemed likely to settle everything. Pursued wherever I took refuge by the underground plots of my

cret persecutors, and seeing no place but Corsica in which I could hope for peace in my old age, which they were trying to deny me everywhere, I decided to go there, under the direction of M. Buttafuoco, as soon as I had the chance. But in order to live there at peace resolved to give up, at least ostensibly, my work on the legislation and to confine myself to writing their history on the spot, as a means to some extent repaying my hosts for their hospitality. I made the reservation, however, that I would quietly gather the information which would enable me to be more useful to them, should I see any prospect of success. Beginning in this way by committing myself to nothing, I hoped to reach a state in which I could think out, in secret and at greater leisure, a plan which might suit them; and that without seriously encroaching on my beloved solitude or submitting myself to a kind of life unbearable to me and for which I had no faculty.

But as I was situated the journey was not an easy one to take. To judge from M. Dastier's information about Corsica I should have none of the simplest comforts of life there, unless I took them: linen, clothes, crockery, kitchen utensils, paper, and books, all these I should have to carry with me. To get myself there with Thérèse, I should have to cross the Alps, and drag a whole outfit with me for six hundred miles. I should have to pass through the territory of various princes and, considering the general attitude to me throughout Europe, I should now naturally have to be prepared, after all my troubles, to meet with obstacles everywhere; and to find everyone joining to heap some fresh misfortune on my head, and in my person to violate all the laws of men and nations. The immense cost, and the fatigues and risks of such a journey, obliged me to look ahead and carefully to assess all the difficulties. The thought of finding myself in the end alone and without resources, at my age and far from all acquaintances, at the mercy of the cruel and savage people that M. Dastier described, was sufficient to make me reflect upon such a plan before putting it into execution. I passionately desired the interview which Buttafuoco had led me to hope for, and I awaited the result of before coming to a final decision.

Whilst I was thus hesitating there came my persecution at Motiers, which forced me to retire. I was not prepared for a long journey, especially to Corsica. I was waiting to hear from Buttafuoco, and took refuge on the island of Saint-Pierre, from which I was driven at the beginning of the winter, as I have already recorded. The Alps were covered with snow, and departure in that direction was consequently

impracticable, particularly at the short notice afforded me. It is true that the order was too preposterous to be capable of execution. For in my lonely retreat, surrounded by water, with only twenty-four hours allowed me from the reception of the order in which to prepare my departure, to find boats to take me from the island and carriages in which to leave Bernese territory; even if I had possessed wings I should have found it difficult to obey. I told the Governor of Nidau this in my reply to his letter, and I hastened to depart from that land of iniquity. Thus I was compelled to give up my cherished scheme, and having been unable in my dejection to prevail on them to arrange for me themselves, I decided, at my Lord Marshal's invitation, to go to Berlin, leaving Thérèse with my books and possessions to winter on the island of Saint-Pierre, and depositing my papers in Du Peyrou's keeping. I made such haste that I left the island the very next morning and was in Bienne before midday. But my journey was almost terminated there by an incident which I must not omit to describe.

As soon as the report got around that I had been ordered to leave my refuge I received an influx of visitors from the neighbourhood, especially of Bernese, who came with the most detestable hypocrisy to flatter and soothe me, and to protest that advantage had been taken of the holidays and the absence of many senators to pass and convey to me this order, at which they assured me the whole Two Hundred were indignant. Among this crowd of comforters came some from the town of Bienne, a small free state enclosed within the territory of Berne, and among them a young man called Wildremet whose family was a leading one and the most influential in that little town, and who begged me warmly on behalf of his fellow citizens to take shelter amongst them. He assured me that they were fervently anxious to receive me, that they would consider it an honour and a pleasure to make me forget the persecution I had suffered, and that I had no reason to fear any Bernese influence upon them; for Bienne was a free city, under no one's jurisdiction, and its citizens were unanimously determined to pay no attention to any request prejudicial to me.

When he saw that I remained unmoved, Wildremet summoned several other persons to his aid, from Bienne and its district and even from Berne, amongst them that same Kirchberger whom I have mentioned, who had sought me out on my retirement to Switzerland, and whose abilities and principles had attracted me to him. But more unexpected and weightier arguments came from M. Barthès, the

secretary to the French Embassy, who came to see me with Wildremet, strongly urged me to accept his invitation, and astonished me by the lively and kindly interest he appeared to take in me. I did not know M. Barthès at all. Nevertheless I seemed to detect all the warmth and eagerness of friendship in his words, and I saw that he was really anxious to persuade me to settle at Bienne. He praised the town and its inhabitants in high-flown language, and seemed to be on such intimate terms with the latter that several times he spoke of them in my presence as his patrons and his fathers.

This move of Barthès upset all my theories. I had always suspected M. de Choiseul of being the hidden author of all the persecutions I had suffered in Switzerland. The behaviour of the French Resident at Geneva and of the Ambassador at Soleure lent only too strong a confirmation to my suspicions. I saw secret French influence behind all that had happened at Berne, at Geneva, and at Neuchâtel; and I thought that the one powerful enemy I had in France was the Duke de Choiseul. What could I make then of Barthès' visit and of the friendly interest he seemed to take in my fortunes? My misfortunes had not yet destroyed the trustfulness that was in my nature, and experience had not yet taught me to see a snare in every show of kindness. In great surprise, I looked for a reason for this benevolence of Barthès, not being stupid enough to suppose that he was acting on his own initiative. I could see an ostentation, and even some air of pretence, about his behaviour that spoke of a hidden purpose. For I had certainly never found in any of these inferior agents the boldness and generosity which often coursed through my own veins when I was in a similar post.

I had once been slightly acquainted with the Chevalier de Beauteville at M. de Luxembourg's, and he had shown me some kindness. Since becoming ambassador, he had given me an occasional sign that he had not forgotten me, and had even invited me to visit him at Soleure. I had been touched by his invitation, but I had not accepted it, being unaccustomed to such polite treatment from those in high places. I accordingly assumed that M. de Beauteville, though compelled to follow his instructions in matters concerning Geneva, nevertheless pitied me in my distress and had procured me by his private endeavours this refuge at Bienne, where I should be able to live quietly under his protection. I was grateful for this kindness, though I did not mean to take advantage of it. For I had quite made up my mind to go to Berlin, and was eagerly looking forward to the moment when I

should be with my Lord Marshal again, being convinced that only with him should I find real repose and lasting happiness.

When I left the island Kirchberger accompanied me to Bienne, and there I found Wildremet and some of his fellow citizens waiting for me to land. We all dined together at the inn; and when I got there my first care was to order a conveyance, since I intended to leave next morning. During the meal these gentlemen again tried to persuade me to remain with them, and this with such warmth and such touching protestations that, despite all my resolutions, my heart, which has never been able to withstand affection, was moved by theirs. As soon as they saw that I was hesitating they redoubled their entreaties with such success that I finally allowed myself to be overborne and agreed to stay at Bienne at least until the spring.

Immediately Wildremet rushed to find me a lodging, and glowingly described as a great find a wretched little third-floor room at the back of a house, looking on to a courtyard, where I had for a view the display of stinking skins belonging to a leather-dresser. My landlord was a little unpleasant-looking man and a fair rascal who, as I learned next morning, was a rake and a gambler with a very poor reputation in his district. He had neither wife nor children nor servants; and though I was in the most delightful country in the world so miserable was my lodging that in the sad confinement of my solitary room I felt liable to die of melancholy within a very few days. What most affected me was that, despite all that had been said of the inhabitants' eagerness to welcome me, I observed no civility in their behaviour to me as I walked through the streets, and no friendliness in their looks. I was, however, quite determined to stay there until I learnt, saw, and felt on the very next day that the town was in a state of violent excitement on my account. Several people obligingly hastened to warn me that to-morrow I should be served with an order, in the stiffest possible terms, commanding me to leave the State – that is the town. I had no one whom I could trust; all those who had persuaded me to stay had scattered. Wildremet had disappeared, I heard no more of Barthès, and it did not look as if his recommendation had won me any great favour with his *patrons* and *fathers* of whom he had boasted in front of me. A M. de Vau-Travers, a Bernese who had a pretty house near the town, nevertheless offered me a refuge there, in the hope, as he said, that there at least I should avoid being stoned. That attraction did not seem to me a tempting enough reason for prolonging my stay among this *hospitable* people.

Having lost three days by this delay, I had already greatly outstayed the twenty-four hours which the Bernese had allowed me in which to leave their territory and, knowing their severity, I was somewhat worried as to the conditions under which they would permit me to cross their land when the Governor of Nidau most opportunely relieved me of my anxiety. As he had openly disapproved of Their Excellencies' violent action against me, he believed, in his generosity, that he owed me public proof that he had nothing to do with it; and he was not afraid to leave his township to pay me a visit at Bienne. He came on the day before my departure and, far from coming incognito, he assumed a certain amount of ceremony and arrived, all dressed up, in his carriage, with his secretary, bringing me a passport made out in his own name permitting me to cross Bernese territory without fear of molestation. His visit touched me more than the passport. I should have been no less appreciative of it if it had been paid to someone else. I know of nothing so potent in its effect on my feelings as an act of courage performed at the right moment on behalf of the weak, unjustly oppressed.

At last, having with difficulty procured a carriage, I left that murderous land on the following morning, before the arrival of the deputation with which they intended to honour me, and even before I could see Thérèse, to whom I had sent a message when I expected to stay in Bienne, to join me there. I had barely time to countermand this by a short note, informing her of my new disaster. It will be seen in the third part of my *Confessions*,* if ever I have strength to write it, how though I thought I was setting out for Berlin I was in fact leaving for England, and how the two ladies† who were trying to control me, after having driven me by weight of intrigue from Switzerland, where I was not sufficiently in their power, finally managed to deliver me over to their friend.‡

I added what follows on the occasion of reading these *Confessions* to the Count and Countess d'Egmont, Prince Pignatelli, the Marchioness de Mesmes, and the Marquis de Juigné.

I have told the truth. If anyone knows anything contrary to what I have here recorded, though he prove it a thousand times, his knowledge is a lie and an imposture; and if he refuses to investigate and

[* Which were never written.]

[† Mme de Boufflers and Mme de Verdelin.]

[‡ David Hume.]

inquire into it during my lifetime he is no lover of justice or of truth. For my part, I publicly and fearlessly declare that anyone, even if he has not read my writings, who will examine my nature, my character, my morals, my likings, my pleasures, and my habits with his own eyes and can still believe me a dishonourable man, is a man who deserves to be stifled.

Thus I concluded my reading, and everyone was silent. Mme d'Egmont was the only person who seemed moved. She trembled visibly but quickly controlled herself, and remained quiet, as did the rest of the company. Such was the advantage I derived from my reading and my declaration.

THE END



THE PENGUIN CLASSICS

A LIBRARY OF TRANSLATIONS OF THE
WORLD'S GREATEST LITERATURE

EDITED BY E. V. RIEU



FRENCH

BALZAC: Old Goriot, <i>trans. M. A. Crawford</i>	2/-
DUMAS: The Three Musketeers, <i>trans. Lord Sudley</i>	5/-
FLAUBERT: Madame Bovary, <i>trans. Alan Russell</i>	2/6
MAUPASSANT: Boule de Suif and Other Stories, <i>trans. H. N. P. Sloman</i>	2/-
MAUPASSANT: Miss Harriet and Other Stories, <i>trans. H. N. P. Sloman</i>	2/-
MOLIERE: Don Juan, Love's the Best Doctor, That Scoundrel Scapin, The Miser, The Would-be Gentleman, <i>trans. John Wood</i>	2/6
PRÉVOST: Manon Lescaut, <i>trans. L. W. Tancock</i>	2/-
ROUSSEAU: The Confessions, <i>trans. J. M. Cohen</i>	5/-
STENDHAL: Scarlet and Black, <i>trans. M. R. B. Shaw</i>	3/6
VOLTAIRE: Candide, <i>trans. John Butt</i>	2/-
ZOLA: Germinal, <i>trans. L. W. Tancock</i>	3/6

RUSSIAN

CHEHOV: The Cherry Orchard, Ivanov, Three Sisters, <i>trans. Elisaveta Fen</i>	2/6
CHEHOV: A Jubilee, The Bear, The Proposal, The Seagull, Uncle Vania, <i>trans. Elisaveta Fen</i>	2/-
DOSTOYEVSKY: Crime and Punishment, <i>trans. David Magarshack</i>	5/-
DOSTOYEVSKY: The Devils [The Possessed], <i>trans. David Magarshack</i>	5/-
GONCHAROV: Oblomov, <i>trans. David Magarshack</i>	3/6
TOLSTOY: Anna Karenin, <i>trans. Rosemary Edmonds</i>	5/-
TURGENEV: On the Eve, <i>trans. Gilbert Gardiner</i>	1/6

Also many translations from

GREEK, LATIN, SPANISH, PORTUGUESE,
GERMAN, NORWEGIAN AUTHORS

Complete list available on application